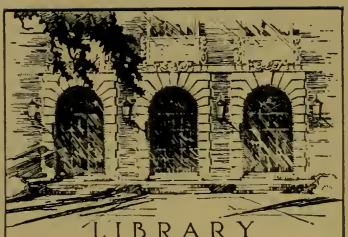

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THE CARBONARO.

A

PIEDMONTESE TALE.

BY

THE DUKE DE LEVIS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE CARBONARO.

CHAPTER I.

THE Piedmontese insurrection was now completely put down: the Austrian government had for the present recovered its confidence; but the future still alarmed it, and not without reason, for it was easy to be seen that its Italian subjects were ready to profit by the very first opportunity of shaking off a yoke which they detested. As it was quite impossible to watch a whole nation which was animated by such a

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spirit, the government limited its efforts to narrowly observing the conduct of those persons who, by their rank, their fortune, or their talents, could exercise any influence over their countrymen. Unhappily precautions of this kind, which the necessity of self-preservation to a certain degree justify, can never be put in practice without an accompanying host of vexatious acts on the part of the police agents, whose interest it always is to alarm the government, in order to increase the importance of their office, and thus entitle their zeal to distinction and reward.

Among the principal agents in the administration in the north-west provinces of the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom, a certain M. de Steinman occupied the most important place. Steinman was an active and intelligent man, not destitute of capacity for business ; but he was rather cunning than penetrating ; in his natural temper

vain and proud ; but from calculation supple and complaisant even to meanness, when his least interest was at stake.

At the period of the first congress of Vienna Steinman, who had no means of existence, and had been petitioning for a long time for a situation which he was unable to procure, thought that the best way to obtain the favour of the Austrian government would be to compose a pamphlet on the rights, or rather the pretensions, of the emperor to the supremacy of Germany, which Steinman supported to the best of his powers. The pamphlet finished by a pompous eulogy on the absolute paternal power in opposition to the representative system, an English invention, altogether inapplicable on the continent, and the fashion of which would doubtless pass away. The pamphlet succeeded, and its author was appointed to a subordinate

employment in the police of Lombardy. He managed it with zeal and ability, and speedily rose to a higher office. Ambitious and avaricious as te nman was, he could not however rest contented with his station: he was desirous at all hazards to obtain wealth and power; and as he could not reproach himself with having in any one instance sacrificed his interest to his conscience, he was irritated to think that a man of so much wit and so few scruples should be verging on forty without any fortune than what arose from a small appointment in the police. "Ah!" exclaimed he, "could I get to one of those good places in the taxes where there is a snug salary, and a few of those odds and ends that fools term unlawful, I might soon secure a comfortable livelihood for the rest of my days." But while he regretted the time he had lost, he did not neglect any occasion of

strengthening the confidence which his superiors began to repose in him. He judged properly that he had a chance of deriving some advantage from the piled-up documents in the archives of the police, touching the existence of secret societies in almost all the corners of Lombardy. None of those societies had, it is true, disturbed the public peace, but they were not the less ready to rise on that account the instant that the Piedmontese army had passed the Tesino; and what proved beyond question the reality of those embryo plots was, the disappearance from their homes of a number of persons of consequence, whose opinions had been suspected, immediately after the suppression of the insurrection. It was obvious that, imagining themselves compromised in it, the most guilty and the most timid had passed the frontiers, while others less deeply engaged had

concealed themselves at home until the storm had blown over. Whilst Steinman was engaged in examining and comparing those documents, he received notice that Baron Sforzali, a member of the ephemeral chamber of the *Possidenti,* one of the wealthiest and most influential persons of his party, who had been supposed to have sought shelter in Spain, was in reality residing at the house of his old friend, the Count de S——a, under the disguise of a journeyman gardener. If any one had the clue of all these political intrigues, assuredly Sforzali was the person; and the arrest of such a criminal could not fail to lead to most important discoveries. Steinman attached so great importance to this arrest, that he resolved to make in person a journey to Cadenabbia, the residence of Count S——a; and there, on pretence of gratifying his curiosity, for that

beautiful seat was full of master-pieces both of ancient and modern art, he calculated on making so exact an examination as should render it impossible for any one to escape his attention. He was the more certain of this, that he was to be assisted by his principal agent, Mister Schelme, whom he termed his Argus, and who had indeed acquired some sort of title to that glorious appellation. If, in fact, he had not quite so many eyes as the Argus of the fable, he could make use of those that nature had vouchsafed him with such rapidity, that he seemed to have the faculty of multiplying them at pleasure. No one was more skilled in physiognomy than he; and he could give to his own with equal facility the expression of menace or of allurement, according as his purpose happened to be intimidation or seduction. His sight was sharp and clear, his ear fine; and

to these physical advantages he joined the most precious moral qualifications for exercising successfully his honourable profession. Insinuating, wheedling, an ingenious falsifier, a bold hypocrite, his light gossip amused young people and females; yet could he change his tone and melt even to tears with the unfortunate wretch whom he wished to entrap, all the while grinning with satanic delight at the success of his infernal tricks. He was, in fact, an active, bold, and zealous servant, provided always he were well paid. I need not ask in what country, whether monarchical or republican, such a man would not be regarded as the pearl of his profession? or in what spot, at this moment, the slightest scruple would be manifested in employing such distinguished talents?

It was in prison, we must tell the truth, that Steinman made the fortunate acquisition of

this personage; but it would be an error to impugn his ability because of that misfortune. Power, every one knows, is here to-day and there to-morrow; and none of the countless multitudes that wage a war of spoliation on their neighbours' goods, from the sneaking thief who limits his ambition to prigging a pocket-handkerchief up to the robber who plunders provinces and kingdoms, is altogether exempt from the rigour and caprices to which fortune subjects the most successful. The fact was, Schelme had got implicated in an unlucky criminal attempt, but not from the treason of his associates; a danger which is so much the rarer of the two, that it is much less to be guarded against in the associations of avowed rogues than is treachery among those who call themselves honest men. So at least says the proverb, which I shall not repeat. In Schelme's

case the proofs were so clear and incontrovertible, that the least that the culprit could look forward to was one or other of the following issues :—

1. Pillory and whipping.

2. The galleys for some twenty years.

3. If the judge were inclined to act rigorously, the gallows.

A delightful choice, it must be allowed. Happily for Schelme, political police was a little concerned in the case, and Steinman was singularly struck by the presence of mind and talent he displayed in his responses. He examined him privately respecting his former life, his connexions, his projects; and he found in him so much intelligence and acuteness, so marked a superiority over the dull-heads that had been sent to him from Vienna, that he resolved to attach him to his office. He pro-

cured for him a conditional pardon ; and began by intrusting him with some delicate commissions, which he managed satisfactorily ; and, in a word, at the end of three months, Steinman could not stir a step without his newly-acquired assistant, who acted as his secretary, his head clerk, his aide-de-camp—in fact, as his prime favourite.

In order to make a circuit of the Lake of Como, Steinman hired one of those boats that are covered with an awning, and which are used in parties and voyages during the summer. He calculated on halting during his progress at the Villa d'Este, where the Queen of England, who was as heedless as she was licentious in her conduct, was in the habit of receiving with marked favour all those persons who were distinguished for their hostility to the government. He had in charge to

communicate to the individual who exercised so scandalous an influence over the queen, that the sovereigns of Europe, and all princes of what quarter soever, being influenced naturally by the best of all possible intentions, it was not to those exalted persons; but to such as abused their confidence, that any fault of their governments was to be attributed; and that, in consequence, his imperial and royal majesty had determined to send Mister Baron B. to pass the summer in one of his strong towers, if her majesty the queen continued to give to the court of Vienna such just subject of displeasure as she had done. This mission completed, Steinman was to continue his route, and he would still leave ample time to arrive at an early hour at Cadenabbia: accident, however, deranged his plans.

He was just about to embark when a mes-

senger from Milan brought him dispatches, which it was necessary to answer: this stopped him several hours; and when at length he was at liberty to set out, the east wind, which is as uniform in those places as the sea-breeze of the tropics, had already begun to blow with even more than its customary violence. As it was directly in their teeth, the boatmen were obliged to stretch for the south shore, which at that particular spot is more sheltered, and the visit to the Villa d'Este was necessarily postponed until his return.

This impediment, and the slowness of their progress, was extremely displeasing to Steinman; and having arrived off Ponte le Blevio, and seeing by his watch that it was already two o'clock, he impatiently exclaimed—"These rascals make no progress; we shall not get to the end of our journey to-day."

" If you were in a hurry," said the boatman in the bow, to whom the observation was obliquely addressed, without at all putting himself about, " you ought to have taken four oars, as all the people that visit Cadenabbia do, unless indeed it be a few Germans."

The Austrian coloured with anger; for he was so well aware of the custom of employing four boatmen, that he calculated on paying the expenses of his jaunt by employing but two. The answer of the boatman sounded to his ear as a reproach, and, rude as he was in his anger, he raised his gold-headed cane to strike him.

" This oar," said he, brandishing the stick, and curling his brow at the same time, " when well applied to such shoulders as thine, is an admirable means of augmenting the activity of those who, like thee, are inclined to be lazy."

Travellers that have visited that country

must have remarked, that the boatmen on the lakes are in general robust and agile fellows; they are tall in person, and exhibit an air of independence which contrasts very remarkably with the crouching and humble aspect of the natives of central Italy. The man on whom Steinman sought to fasten this truly German quarrel had, besides, served for two years on the lake, on board the guard-flotilla, during the campaigns of Bonaparte. He instantly drew from the water his long oar, and putting himself in a posture of defence, with a tone in which contempt was mingled with anger, and with a bitter smile playing round his lip, exclaimed—"Your cane, like the person that bears it, would scare the fishes at most."

Steinman, foaming with rage, sprung upon the thwart in order to employ his weapon with more advantage; but an unforeseen accident

prevented the parties from coming to blows. The boatman in the stern, who steered the boat, at the same time that he assisted in propelling her, and who participated in the indignation of his companion, perceiving a-head of them a pointed rock on a level with the water, drove the bow of the shallop against it with so much violence, and at the same time with so much address, that he knocked a hole in its side. The shock was so violent, that Steinman lost his balance, and tumbled into the water: as to Schelme, he caught hold of the supports of the awning, and thus avoided a fall; but he could not believe himself in safety when he saw the water pouring in through the seam which the stroke had opened in the slim boarding of the vessel. There was, however, no real danger; for at that part the lake was so low, that it was not above three or four feet in

depth, and they were not above fifty yards' distance from the dry land of the Palace of Varèze. Schelme seeing his patron direct his course thither did not hesitate for a moment to join him, and leaped lightly over the side of the boat for that purpose, at the same time that the boatmen removed towards the stern a portion of the stones which they used as ballast, and both taking their stand there, disengaged the prow of the vessel, and vigorously plying their scoops, contrived in that way to keep it afloat. In this awkward plight they slowly withdrew, cursing the scrubs as they left them, and hallooing after them with cries of mockery. Their boat, it is true, was damaged, and it would require some money to refit it; and they had besides lost their fare; but then they were revenged! And the irresistible attractions that the English or Dutch

sailor finds in his grog or his schiedam, the Italian finds in the indulgence of his revenge. Any one of these is as natural a taste as another, and every nation pleases itself in those matters.

Our two Germans were kindly received on their landing by the servants of the Marquis of Varèze, who had witnessed the mischance from the window of the dining-room, where he was just about to sit down to table, and who had sent to the assistance of the shipwrecked travellers. No sooner had Schelme reached the dry land than he gave himself a shake, after the fashion of some shaggy spaniel when it has dipped to the bottom of a pool for the stone that had been thrown in by its master, and walked away with as much ease as if nothing unpleasant had happened. His companion in misfortune did not carry it off so easily. His progress

was as much embarrassed as that of a post-boy stuck in his jack-boots. Those which he wore had, indeed, nothing uncommon either in shape or weight; but the special regard that he had of his health having led him to wear water-proof leather, the consequence was that the liquid that had once got in could find no road out again, each leg was immersed in at least a couple of quarts; and it was only by leaning on the arm of Schelme with the one hand, and on his gold-headed cane with the other, that he contrived to gain the porch of the palace.

The marquis was chained to his chair by the gout, and Thomasine, in consequence, came forward to receive the unexpected guests. Notwithstanding her generally sympathising disposition, and although she was much less disposed to ridicule than most young people

of her age, yet she could not refrain from a smile on beholding them. The figure of Steinman, especially, was extremely grotesque; he was dripping from the head to the heels: his frogged camlet great-coat clipped him round like a strait-waistcoat; his thick matted hair of pale brown, or flaxen hue rather, gave to his head somewhat of the appearance of a large swollen-up frog; and at every step that he took there was a squash from the water that sought, but in vain, to escape from its prison-house. I know not how it comes about, but there is always something ridiculous in the appearance of a person when soused with water. Conceive the gravest magistrate, the most august prince, the general of the most stern aspect, and every one of them shall have a pitiful and silly look after getting a ducking. It must be admitted that the exterior dignity

of a man depends on small matters; and yet what a store does vanity set by it!

Steinman, on entering the dining-room, endeavoured to compensate by the importance of his tone and of his behaviour for the disadvantage consequent on his condition. "My lord marquis," said he with a grave air, "the man whom you see before you in this sorry plight is, nevertheless, a civil officiary of high standing in the administration of the Lombardo-Venetian government, and at this moment engaged in matters of state police under the orders of his imperial highness the archduke viceroy. My name is Steinman, and this is M. Schelme, a gentleman also belonging to the executive.

"We have," he proceeded, "been swamped: the awkwardness and insolence of our boatmen, which I shall not fail to punish, prevent us

from pursuing our route; and I am come to request from you, as I well may from a loyal subject of his majesty the emperor and king, such means of transport as are at your disposal."

"To-night," replied the old marquis with his accustomed politeness, "I have none to offer you. My boat is at Como, and my pleasure shallop is in the hands of the carpenter, but it will be ready at an early hour to-morrow. My boatmen are steady fellows, and they shall then be at your command. In the meanwhile you must dine with me, and pass the night here; but before any thing be done, you must change your dress, you require it." Steinman was of the same opinion, and he proceeded for that purpose into another room, where his boots were pulled off; a process which produced an inundation, the recollection of which yet

serves to amuse the servants at Blevio. He was then equipped with a gold-laced suit of the marquis's, which the latter was in the habit of wearing on gala-days; but which, as Steinman was much stouter than the old man, appeared on him like a fancy hunting-jacket. The breeches, from the same cause, did not reach the knee; but notwithstanding this, he did not do the less justice to the marquis's dinner.

When they rose from table Steinman appeared to regret extremely that he could not pursue his journey immediately; the purpose of which, according to his description of it, was of the highest importance. "A great deal is said," he observed with an air of disdain, "of the beauty of your lake and of its environs. It may appear beautiful to a parcel of Englishmen who are wearied of their own country, and who do not know what to do with their money, or

to lazy tourists who linger in transport at every fine view they meet with, but it is impossible that reasonable people should admire a country where communication is impossible. Why, egad! we are as completely shut up here as at Venice, where you cannot stir from one house to another without a gondola. Patience, however, patience. Come next year, we shall have a military road opened, from Lecca up the Adda, all the way to the emperor's hereditary states. I have seen the plans of the work, and they are superb. It will cost a pretty penny; two or three millions of florins at least. But," he added, with a hoarse laugh of more noise than wit, "you are warm folks, you gentlemen of Lombardy; you can easily afford to furnish the means of such an improvement, and of many more than that."

"Sir," replied the marquis somewhat tartly,

" when people are called on to pay the half of their income to the state, and when the market for their produce is at the same time hermetically sealed against them, as it is at present, it is impossible to be rich :—we are poor, sir, very poor. For my part, I never was reduced to such straits."

" That is rather unfortunate, certainly," replied the Austrian in a careless tone ; " but what is to be done, marquis? The emperor must pay his gallant troops ; they cannot live on air, you'll grant that. It is equally necessary for his majesty to provide for the civilians that he employs ; and their wages are not excessive, I can answer for it. The only objection that is urged by some persons is, that the army that occupies the country might be somewhat reduced ; but experience has shown the fallacy of that opinion. It is not three months past since it was

plain to every one that we had not enough of troops here. Yes, yes, it is impossible to be certain of any thing, unless you have plenty of soldiers, plenty of officers, and plenty of military roads; I will not give up that to any man. It is in that way that victors have at all times acted, in order to compel the submission of the people they conquered. The Romans, for instance;"—here M. Steinman drew himself up and put on a learned air;—"was it not they who constructed those magnificent causeways whose very remains still attest the greatness of their power and the wisdom of their policy?"

"No, sir," replied the marquis in a lively tone of voice, when he found himself thus placed on his favourite ground where, besides, he reckoned on finding arguments in support of his just complaints; "the Romans, sir, after the example of the Carthaginians; for you are probably

aware that it is to the Africans we owe the invention of paved-ways, as Isidorus, in his *Origines*, book 15. chapter the last, informs us: the Romans, I say, entered upon many grand undertakings of that kind; but, sir, they never opened any communications that were not indispensable. In Lombardy here, for instance, you will find no *via*, but the *Blandia Augusta Veronensis*, which was a branch of the *Æmilia Parmensis*; it went up the banks of the Athesis, or, as we now term it, the Adige, to the pass that leads through the Tyrolese Alps to the Danube, near to *Augusta Vindelicorum*. But neither the Romans nor any of their successors ever dreamed of constructing useless and expensive roads on the broken and precipitous shores of the Benacus,* or of our Larium.† It was only on the

* Lago di Garda. † Como.

plain that these roads were formed, where the *Via Gallica*, or *Posthumia*, joined the Milanese with the territory of the *Veneti*. Such, at least, are the only roads noticed by writers on these subjects, and no others appear in the Itinerarium of Antoninus, or in Peutinger's Chart."

The mention of the name of Peutinger, whose termination betrayed its High-Dutch extraction, came like music on the ear of Steinman. There is a charm in every thing connected with the country of our birth that exalts the mind of the noblest and the greatest, and even the most base are not insensible to its influence.

"That Peutinger," interrupted the Austrian *employé*, "was a brave German, a learned man, was he not?"

"He is universally looked on as respectable authority. I have just at hand, somewhere

here, an excellent edition of his work, which I shall show you."

"Don't trouble yourself," replied Steinman, "who had been alarmed by the small specimen already vouchsafed him of the marquis's erudition; "you would never manage to get at the book in the midst of all that mass of papers that is heaped on your bureau. God forgive us, they are enow of them to fit out a conspiracy."

The word conspiracy, to which Steinman at the moment attached no important meaning, did not produce the less marked effect on the countenance of the old marquis. Timid from disposition, and easily alarmed on slight occasions, he immediately suspected some allusion to his former connexion with the enemies of the government, or to his more recent services to La Cesia; and as the man who made it

was a superior officer of police, he gave himself up for a lost man. A deadly paleness covered his cheeks, and his confusion was so perceptible, that Schelme touched the knee of his master in order to make him attend to it. Thomasine, who also perceived her father's trouble, thought it best to join in the conversation, in order to give her father time to recover possession of himself.

"Those gentlemen," said she, "see nothing but plots wherever they turn their eyes; it is their trade. It is but just that they should inspect our papers. Here is a dissertation on a species of tiling lately discovered at Orbitello. This large roll contains a description of the handle of an Etruscan vase. This bundle of letters is the correspondence of the secretary of the Studiosi dell' Antichita of Bologna—."

"And this sheet, covered over with singular

characters, which you seem so anxious to conceal from our sight," said Schelme, maliciously taking hold of a paper which indeed Thomasine had placed below the others, "will you be so good as to tell us what it means?"

"Sir," replied she hastily, "we have nothing to conceal, but I wished to avoid a word of so difficult pronunciation as *boustroph—boustrophid*—you must assist me, father."

"Your memory is very short, Thomasine," replied the marquis, "it is a fac-simile of a *boustrophemonian* MS. This description of writing is very rarely found on monuments, for it ceased to be commonly used so far back as the time of Solon: its peculiarity consists in this, that the lines run alternately from left to right and from right to left, precisely as the oxen trace the furrows, and from that resemblance it received its name of *boustrophemon*. This spe-

cimen I received from the learned Abbate Mai, together with a piece of Palimpsest MS.

"You will perceive," continued Thomasine, "that there is no ground for suspicion in all this, any more than there is in this large roll on the sofa, which is a copy of a marble at the Villa Pliniana."

Steinman would not allow her to finish. "My pretty miss," said he, with as much impudence as gallantry, "such a pleader as you are might successfully defend the worst cause, but it is superfluous to enter on a justification of the noble marquis. I am very far from suspecting," added he, "that so honourable a gentleman, and one who performs the duties of hospitality so handsomely, has mixed himself up with any criminal intrigue. I am merely surprised that a simple word should have so much disconcerted him. Other

men under such circumstances might indulge suspicions, but for me I would not for the world give any uneasiness to so worthy a family."

The marquis, restored to confidence by these kind expressions, said, that if he had appeared somewhat confused it was attributable solely to the delicate state of his health, which rendered him subject to a kind of fainting fits. He had not the slightest wish, indeed he was most anxious that the officers should inspect the whole of his papers with the utmost rigidness. "You will find among them," added the old man, "the fruits of five-and-thirty years of study, which I am bold to say has not been altogether thrown away in the advancement of science. I have ever been a stranger to politics, and from my literary inclinations, as well as from my peaceful disposition, the declared

enemy of all commotions. I wish, for the happiness of my country, that every one thought as I do on these matters."

"Well said," exclaimed Steinman; "these are the words of a wise man. Continue to amuse yourself with the ancients, and leave our Holy Alliance to settle the moderns, and every thing will go on swimmingly. But come, Schelme, let us leave the marquis and his charming daughter to their repose. To-morrow at break of day we shall continue our voyage in the shallop, which he has been kind enough to say he will lend us."

The travellers were then conducted with all due ceremony to the apartment which had been prepared for their reception. Schelme, whose glance was more piercing than that of his companion, had remarked not only the confusion of the father, but he observed that Thomasine

also was not without uneasiness, even when she pretended least to feel it; she even gave some very marked and suspicious signals to her father.

"Who will deny," said he, rubbing his hands, "that fortune smiles on us? While we are running after conspirators, that after all may slip through our fingers, here are others who come forward and offer themselves to us. If you will be guided by me, sir, when we get to Como, we shall have an attentive perusal of the great secret register, at the article Varèze; there is no doubt his name will be down, as those of all the nobles are. We shall thus learn his connexions and his past conduct; and with these data I pledge my word I'll make him tell all he knows. I must have a laugh by anticipation at the terror the poor old man will not fail to exhibit when I begin, in the tone

you know I can adopt, to tell him about prisons and dungeons, and, to clinch the matter, about scaffolds. Oh! I'll answer for it his daughter will be in a pretty fright."

"By-the-bye, Schelme, is not she a nice girl? as blooming as a German—such eyes, and such an expression!"

"Psha! you have seen nothing of her yet," replied the worthy, with the grin of a tiger, and a look that painted the wickedness of his heart; "she will be infinitely more interesting when she comes with tears in her eyes to entreat us to save her father. Egad, I don't know how we shall resist her. But come, sleep is a safe counsellor; we shall see to-morrow." These words uttered, the two worthy gentlemen wished each other good night, and in a few minutes they were in a sound sleep, which they continued to enjoy peacefully and undisturbedly until the

dawn. Close to them, and under the same roof, lay two virtuous souls, who passed in watchful uneasiness a long night disturbed alike by sickness and sorrow. But there is a day of compensation approaching, when all these accounts will be balanced—the great day of general retribution—a long day, for it will be limited only by eternity.

CHAPTER II.

THE person supposed to be concealed in the house of Count de S——a was not there, and it was even doubtful if he ever had been there. The police are often abused by false intelligence communicated by the enemies of government, or by persons who seek merely to amuse themselves at their expense. As soon as Steinman and Schelme had returned to Como, they began, as they had previously determined, to inquire into the affairs of the

Marquis Varèze, and the register was accordingly consulted. The following were the notices that it presented :

" Varèze (Ambrosio Agostino di Solatto), marquis, descended from one of the oldest and most respectable families in the north of Lombardy, aged about sixty-six ; a rich landholder ; possesses extensive property to the east of the Lago Maggiore, near to Casciago ; believed to have monies in the English funds.

" Character—weak, timid, vain of his rank, hostile to liberal opinions, but not the less an enemy to the Austrian government, whose fall he secretly desires. Under all the circumstances attending the revolution, he conducted himself with circumspection ; and since 1815, nothing has been discovered in his correspondence, which is extensive, that does not relate to subjects of art and antiquities. He lives very

retired, passing the greater part of the year with his daughter in his palace at Blevio, on the Lake of Como. No one is in the habit of visiting them but his relation, Count Sospoli, who appears to exercise a great influence over him. (Vide Sospoli.)"

On referring to the article indicated, Count Sospoli was found to be described as a dangerous person, whom it was proper to watch strictly; that he had a nephew who had been heard to boast that his uncle had had the ingenuity to extract for the use of the secret societies the sum of ten thousand francs from the most cowardly old man in Como; which description could hardly apply to any one but to the Marquis Varèze. He had added, continued the statement, that it was to him that the sum was handed over: the fact was never, however, investigated; because the count, dreading an

arrest, had set out unexpectedly for Spain along with his nephew, who had there entered into one of the Italian corps that were levied by the cortès.

Under these circumstances, Schelme insisted on returning to Blevio. "What do we risk?" said he to Steinman; "if nothing be discovered, still our journey will furnish matter for a report which will prove to the administration the activity of your zeal; but every circumstance serves to convince me that by practising a little address we may come to the knowledge of some important secrets. You may depend on it they were in the grand plot, both the father and daughter. With all her airs of candour, she is a very cunning one, that Miss Thomasine. I could wager that it was she who managed the arrangements with the nephew of Count Sospoli, while the poor old marquis was think-

ing more of his antiquities than of politics."—"All you say is quite possible," replied Steinman, smiling at the idea of seeing Thomasine again, whose beauty had made a deep impression on his heart; "and at worst, the visit presents no difficulty."

Two days after they set out. Steinman, who was anxious to do away the impression produced by his former awkward entrance into Blevio, and to appear with every possible advantage to its inmates, had dressed himself in his most fashionable suit. His blue frock, with its large gilt buttons and red collar, and his scarlet waistcoat, held a sort of middle place between the civil and military habit. His three-cornered hat, turned up *à la Prussienne,* gave him an almost martial air; and his water-proof boots, which were nicely polished, shone like a looking-glass. We believe we forgot to state

that in person Steinman was tall, but ill-shaped; his shoulders were square and high, his neck short and somewhat awry, his face flat, his eyes of a pale blue, and inclined to a squint. There was little in this assemblage of features to attract attention; and yet, thanks to a certain swaggering and bold air, he had been successful with several females whose tastes were not over fastidious. His conquests were not indeed very flattering, but they did not the less add to the good opinion he entertained of his personal attractions. On his arrival he saluted the marquis with an easy air, and told him that an affair of importance having led him to that side of the lake, he did not wish to pass Blevio without offering his thanks to its amiable inmates for the reception they had given him at his former visit. This compliment, accompanied by a smile, which he endeavoured

to render as gallant as possible, was particularly addressed to Thomasine, who, however, replied to it in the coldest and most reserved terms. The old nobleman kept Steinman to dinner, and even pressed him to prolong his stay until next day. Fear more than politeness, we must confess, dictated these obliging invitations; for he would have willingly learned that their object was at the bottom of the lake, or a hundred miles off.

During dinner nothing of interest occurred; the only conversation that passed respected the new theatre at the Villa d'Este, which had been opened the previous evening, when the Queen of England appeared on the stage, along with several members of the Bergami family. After dinner, Steinman, assuming all at once a grave and stern aspect, said—

"You must not be surprised, marquis, that I

am grieved and hurt, and the additional obligations that you have just conferred on me afflict me most deeply. Dispatches arrived yesterday from Milan, which state that the Austrian government intend to abandon their plans of mildness and forbearance, which, in fact, have hitherto served only to engender ingratitude and to harden offenders. They have at length resolved to employ the most severe measures: they wish to know what they have to depend upon; and they will especially visit those persons who, by their exalted rank, should give an example of obedience, if not of fidelity."

Such a preamble froze the old man with terror. From the first visit of the police-officers he had never been wholly without uneasiness; he was silent, however, but his left leg, which was the weaker of the two, began to shake as

if he had been seized with a severe shivering fit. After a considerable pause the Austrian, elevating his voice and assuming an interrogative tone, went on—

"Come to the point, marquis; reply to my questions. Is it long since you had any news of Count Sospoli? Where is he now? You must know that the government of his majesty are anxious to get possession of his person, and of the persons of his accomplices."

The name of Sospoli produced as terrible an effect on the poor old man as if a thunderbolt had dropped at the foot of his chair. He grew pale, he reddened, tried to answer, stammered out some unintelligible words, but he could no more. As the poet describes it, *vox faucibus hæsit*. His situation was indeed deplorable: yet far from manifesting the slight-

est compassion for him, Schelme, grinning maliciously on Thomasine, observed, "I am afraid, miss, your papa is suffering at this moment under one of those fainting fits to which he told us the other day he was subject!"

A look of mingled indignation and contempt was the only answer vouchsafed him; but Schelme, who was now irritated in his turn, continued the attack; and making use, for the purpose of ensnaring and alarming his victim, of the unhappy talent that he possessed of uttering a falsehood with all the appearance of sincerity and truth—"Why," said he, "take so much pains to conceal matters from us when every particular is known and confessed? We have the proofs of guilt in our hands. Nay, we have more; it was but last night that the young officer was seized." "What! seized La Ces—?" exclaimed Tho-

masine, in a tone of piercing anguish, and sunk lifeless on the floor. Her father endeavoured to sustain her, but he was too feeble for the purpose; and she would have dragged him down in her fall had not Steinman come to his assistance. This scene of desolating grief appeared to produce an impression on him which could hardly have been expected from his known disposition, and from the habitual harshness with which he exercised the duties of his office. The change, however, that it wrought was altogether superficial; it did not originate in any sentiment of humanity; his sensibility had been excited by the charms of Thomasine. He said to her in a tone of compassion, when she recovered her senses, "Compose yourself, miss; there is no cause for despair in all this. The crime committed by the marquis, your father, is not a capital one;

and even were it so, there are infallible modes of obtaining mercy of the infinite clemency of his imperial majesty. All that your father has to do is to abjure connexion with the enemies of Austria; and the only pledge of his sincerity required will be a full confession of all the persons he knows to be implicated, and of their criminal designs. Come, sir, go on with your confession, we are ready to receive it."

The marquis blushed when he heard these words addressed to him: there was a principle of honour in his heart, timid though it was, and his soul was generous, but indifferently served, or rather domineered over by frail organs; yet irritated by so direct an insult as a proposal of such infamous conduct was, he replied with considerable heat—"My conscience accuses me of no crime; but if what has been imputed to me be considered as such,

I know how to suffer alone; no one shall ever reproach me with dragging him into the abyss along with me."

"This is talking too high," replied Schelme, "when we have the proofs of your having given ten thousand francs to Count Sospoli."

"I may lend my money to a friend without being accountable for the improper use to which he may put it," said the marquis; "it belongs to my accusers to prove that I lent it with a criminal intention."

"I am willing to believe that your conduct has been irreproachable; but how am I, on such a supposition, to explain the extraordinary emotion of your daughter when she was informed of the arrest of her youthful accomplice?"

"And why should she not take a lively interest in the fate of a wounded and unfor-

tunate kinsman whom we received here when he was abandoned and a fugitive? The cares that we had to bestow on him for several weeks only endeared him to us the more."

On hearing these words Schelme started with surprise, and Steinman remained speechless. Both of them saw in a moment the mistake into which they had fallen; for the circumstances of which the marquis spoke could not in any respect apply to young Sospoli, who had never been either wounded or a fugitive.

After a moment's reflection Steinman recovered himself, and addressing the old nobleman, went on—"What you have this moment declared merits the greatest attention; and it grieves me to state to you, it very much aggravates the difficulties of the situation in

which you were already placed. To the charge of having given money for the purpose of encouraging rebellion in the country, is now to be added the crime confessed by yourself of having given shelter and protection to a proscript; and that without giving the slightest intimation to the authorities, as the laws and the police regulations so expressly order.

"When I came here I frankly confess I was completely ignorant of the fact you have just announced: I only knew what concerned Count Sospoli and his nephew."

"Then it is young Sospoli that has been arrested?" interrupted Thomasine, gasping with anxiety to hear the answer to her interrogatory.

"There has been nobody arrested at all," said Schelme; "that was a mere trick of the

trade. Now, however, we have some hopes of arresting the important personage that you have indicated."

"It is necessary, it is indeed indispensable," said Steinman, interrupting his assistant in a tone of hypocritical mildness, "that the marquis—his own interest demands it—should explain. Let him but give us the name and some traces of the person whom he received so imprudently, and I shall take on my own responsibility to receive the declaration, tardy though it be, as if it had been made within the period prescribed by the *ordonnance*."

If Thomasine had entertained the slightest apprehension of her father's steadiness, she would not have scrupled to interpose for the purpose of preventing the secret of her lover from being betrayed; but she entertained no such fear; nor did the marquis disappoint her,

for he calmly and in a dignified manner replied—"I cannot possibly satisfy your curiosity, sir; and I am willing to judge of M. Steinman with so much kindness, as to believe that, in my situation, he would act as I do."

"Your situation!" cried Schelme, impudently, "foregad! it is a very indifferent one. This display of obstinacy may lead you a long way from home, marquis, perhaps as far as Venice. There is an ancient convent of St. Michael there, where all the state-prisoners are at this moment assembled and waiting for judgment. The convent stands on an island in the midst of the *lagunes;* it is well secured, I assure you: the windows are double-grated. You will pass your time very pleasantly there, that is, if the government do not re-establish, as it is said they have some intention of doing, the famous prison of the *plombei*, which, in faith, I think

they were by far too hasty in destroying;—that station would be a little hottish in summer, and make you feel the loss of the cool breeze of the lake here. The only thing that puzzles me is what the deuce they will do with Miss Thomasine; I don't think it was usual to shut up women in the *plombei*, and I rather doubt whether the delicacy of their constitution could bear the temperature of the air."*

* The *plombei*, a state-prison of a most odious character and history, on the top of the palace of the doge at Venice, was destroyed on the same day on which the ancient republic fell; as well as the famous lions' heads, whose mouths were used for receiving anonymous accusations. Schelme calumniated the Austrian government when he imputed to them the project of reviving those horrible cells; they never thought of such a thing. It is true the Bridge of Sighs; a covered-way leading across the canal, which separates the prisons from the court where the high tribunal sits, still remains; but the only sinistrous particular

The marquis sustained this terrible menace with sufficient firmness, so long as it went merely to affect himself; but the idea of being separated from his daughter, or of seeing her buried in a horrible dungeon, was too much for his feeble frame to bear: he burst into tears, and gave himself up to all the outward symptoms of despair, while Thomasine clasped him in her arms, exclaiming, while her words were interrupted with tears and sobs, "No, my dear father, death, and nothing but death, shall separate us!"

So lovely did she appear at that moment, and

about that bridge is its name, which adds nothing to the sufferings of the prisoners. A communication similar in every respect has always existed, and still exists at Genoa, between the palace of the doge and the prison, yet no one ever thought of reproaching the authorities for suffering it: it was a matter of security and not of tyranny.—*Note of the French editor.*

so affecting was her grief, that Steinman could not help rebuking Schelme for the harshness that he had used in thus adding to the anguish of the accused.

" Sir," said he to the marquis, " I will give you time to reflect coolly on these matters. Two days hence I shall return for your answer. In the mean time, I must not compromise the interests of the state, and I must have your word of honour that you will remain here."

" And how can he do otherwise," replied the weeping Thomasine, " in the condition to which you have reduced him ?"

" I wish with all my soul," replied Steinman, in a honied tone, " that I were allowed to soften the rigours of my professional duty." So saying, he gave a sign to Schelme to follow him, and left the house, imagining, with great

reason, that he could not at that moment do any thing that was more agreeable to Thomasine.

During the whole of the passage Steinman appeared plunged in thought. In vain did Schelme repeatedly attempt to induce him to talk about the family of Varèze, he only replied by a yes or a no; and when he landed, he dismissed his follower abruptly, saying he would see him next day. The latter, however, insisted on being heard then. "The matter," said he, "on which I wish to speak to you is of the utmost importance, and it requires instant attention; it concerns you directly."

"Well, then," said Steinman, "come in; but be brief."

Schelme followed into his closet, and after shutting the door—"Sir," said he, "I am too much attached to you to allow you to let slip an opportunity, perhaps the only one that may

ever present itself, without taking advantage of it, to acquire without labour and without danger what twenty years of hard service will scarcely insure to you.—What do you mean by that waive of your hand? You will thus far at least do me justice as to suppose that I do not intend to propose to you any thing contrary to your duty. I know your principles too well, and I myself——."

"What is the use of all this preamble?—explain what you mean."

"Why, in the first place, I beg you to remark that the government has no interest in prosecuting the Marquis Varèze, an infirm and timorous old man, who cannot possibly present to it any occasion of uneasiness, and who would only cumber to no purpose the prison of St. Michael. This granted—I observe, in the second place, that this old man is wealthy; that he

has cash which he knows not what to do with, and that he would willingly part with it to him who should extricate him from his present difficulties and restore him to security. I cannot be supposed to know what he might come down for that piece of service; but with so considerable a fortune as his, it would not be too much to reckon on a hundred thousand francs in ready money, or in good bills payable at sight. Now it strikes me that such a sum would be infinitely better in your purse than in his."

"A hundred thousand francs," said Steinman, hesitatingly; "that would be a pretty penny, doubtless; but such compromises are of a very ticklish character. I don't say that one may not accept a gift —a voluntary one I mean —under certain circumstances."

"Certainly," replied Schelme, who saw that

his patron was only puzzled as to the form under which his proposition should be carried into execution; "certainly, under certain circumstances, a gift may be accepted. If the object were to save from the punishment of his conspiracy a dangerous criminal, the mines of Peru would not prevail on me; I would spurn them from me with indignation. But what advantage, I again ask, can accrue to our good emperor by shutting up in the castle this poor body of a marquis? In some six months he must be released, as well as his daughter, for want of proof; that is, if either of them survived so long, which I should hardly expect; for despair such as theirs I never witnessed."

These last words recalled to the mind of Steinman the image of Thomasine drowned in tears. "You did wrong, Schelme," said he sharply, "you did very wrong to alarm that

delicate young girl so much. How was it possible for her to bear the idea of her father loaded with irons, and buried in the bottom of a dungeon?"

"Why, what would you have? it was absolutely necessary to intimidate them to get them to speak. But if I went too far, it is but a failing of the trade after all. Happily, however, it depends on you, sir, to repair my faults; and you may do so the more easily, that no inquisition has been begun; no interrogatory written down; —there is no document to be suppressed—no paper to be abstracted; all which is ever attended with trouble. In fact, there is nothing but the money to receive, and that in return for a service rendered to a respectable and unfortunate family: the deed is every way worthy of you."

Such language, which was not at all in ac-

cordance with the malicious disposition of Schelme, would under any other circumstances have awakened the suspicions of Steinman; but his mind was not sufficiently calm to make any such observations. His cupidity was too much excited at the prospect of appropriating a large sum of money without any risk, especially as he saw in the project submitted to him a means of satisfying every one concerned.

"In fact, I think, Schelme," said he, after a pause, "that such a way of arranging this business would please every body. But there is always a confounded deal of difficulty in entering on a proposition such as you hint at, although at bottom it be much more advantageous to the party, who is thus saved from a criminal process, than to him who reaps some little emolument in consequence. At all events, a man in my superior rank cannot

figure in the treaty. We must have a subordinate agent of no importance, and of whom in case of necessity we may deny all knowledge."

"Say me, for instance; that is, if you think I could manage it."

"Certainly I can rely entirely on your judgment and your discretion.—Ah! while you are treating with the father, you will be consoling Thomasine—you will, you rogue!"

"Of course I shall not neglect that."

"We'll set out to-morrow morning early; you cannot be too early." So saying, he grasped his hand, exclaiming, while he made use of the friendly gesture—"You'll sleep now, surely." Which pronounced as loudly as heartily, they separated.

CHAPTER III.

When Schelme presented himself to Steinman on his return from Blevio, he had all the appearance of a man who has satisfactorily acquitted himself of an important and difficult commission.

"I rather fear," said he on entering, "that I have not come up to your views; but you must even excuse me, since I have done all I could. You must know, also, that the old fellow is by no means so rich in disposable pro-

perty as we were led to imagine. He gave me proofs of this, by producing his correspondence; and though he had been ever so willing, he could not have added to the sum that I have brought you. Here is, first of all, a bill of exchange on the house of Coutts and Co., London, for two thousand pounds sterling; and, secondly, an order on the brothers Neri, at Milan, for twenty thousand francs. These are quite good, though I confess I should have preferred the gold; but I ascertained that, except the private purse of Miss Thomasine, which you would hardly have wished me to meddle with, he has not twenty napoleons left in the palace. Every thing is arranged to the satisfaction of all parties. They were quite content with my word of honour, which I gave them in your name; and tranquillity now reigns once more in the mansion of Varèze."

To the great astonishment of Schelme, Steinman displayed no symptoms of pleasure; and taking, with the air of a man who is thinking on something else, the two bills, he put them without reading them in his pocket-book, saying—"You have managed the whole matter very ably; but since you set out I have been reflecting on it, and I have come to a determination to carry back these documents to Blevio to-morrow."

These words were pronounced in so decided a tone as to admit of no reply, and Schelme offered none.

"When shall we set out?"

"I shall go as soon as the business of the morning is over, and I shall travel alone; I shall speak to you when I come back."

Steinman added that at that moment he had to finish some letters that were pressing, and

dismissed his emissary quite mortified by such a reception.

"I cannot understand all this," said he, on regaining his lodgings; "so sudden a change! Well, thank God, I have not come back with my hands empty, and they shall flay me alive before they get me to give back what I have got."

To understand this soliloquy, it is necessary to state that Schelme in stipulating for the interests of his patron had not forgotten his own. He had, like a cunning diplomatist, promised, flattered, threatened; and when the bargain was at length struck, he thought that, after the approved example of other ambassadors, who have a right to a present when their negotiation is completed, the marquis could not do less than present him with the two rouleaux of napoleons that he had accidentally seen in the front of a drawer in his bureau.

These he pressed for so earnestly, that the old marquis, fearing if he refused compliance he might create in this man a powerful enemy, at length consented to give up what he had hoarded for many years, and for an extraordinary call.

Next day Steinman, as soon as he was at leisure, did not fail to return to Blevio. He found Thomasine in the apartment of her father; as he expected, she started with fear and surprise on seeing him enter.—"I thought," said she with a trembling voice, "that every thing was over. What new difficulty has started up? Oh, my God!——"

"None, miss," hastily interrupted Steinman; "you may rest in peace: what I came to communicate to your father is not alarming in its nature. Perhaps," he added with a smile, which he was anxious to render agreeable, "he may admit you to a share in our conversation;

but for the present I would wish to speak to him alone."

Thomasine hesitated; she had a disinclination to leaving her father with a man of a bad character, and one who had already caused him so much uneasiness, but at a signal from the marquis she consented to withdraw. Steinman accompanied her with a respectful air to the door of the apartment, which he closed after her. He then returned, and taking a seat by the desk of the old nobleman, began to open a large red-morocco pocket-book with a silver clasp, which appeared quite crammed with different papers. Suddenly halting in the midst of this operation, he exclaimed, drawing a small packet from his pocket—"I had forgot," said he, presenting it with the envelop to the marquis, "a preliminary that is indispensable. There, sir, are the bills of exchange, which were transmitted to

me on your part. If I refuse to accept of them, it is not, I assure you, that I disdain such a proof of your kindness, but because my rank and my birth forbid me to accept of money from any one but the emperor my master. You are aware, my dear marquis," he continued, with easy assurance, "that it is not allowable for noble persons like us to do a great many things that people of ordinary rank may practice without impropriety."

Astonishment kept the marquis from replying to this fine harangue. When he first saw Steinman come in, his apprehension was that the motive of so unexpected a visit was to dispute the bargain that had been concluded with Schelme, in the hope of extorting from him a larger sum, and he was puzzling himself how to escape this new vexation; but when, so far from asking him for more, he saw the Austrian

actually offering him back the bills he had already given away, he was utterly at a loss to guess at his ulterior intentions, and therefore he continued silent. Steinman, seeing the marquis hesitate about taking back the bills of exchange, laid them down on the bureau; and then opening his pocket-book with much solemnity, he drew from it a parchment diploma, from which were suspended a large seal of yellow wax and a smaller one of green; along with this he also produced a number of other decrees of the Aulic Council, loaded with stamps and with seals of all forms and of all sizes. "I thought it but proper," said he, on producing these documents, "that before I made known to you the important business on which I now wait on you, it was fitting, nay indispensable, that I should prove to you the nobility of my house; a nobility which ascends to the time

of Joseph I., of illustrious memory. The original diploma which you hold in your hand, and which proves that fact, has been duly enrolled in the registers of the circle of Lower Saxony. I have brought also certificates of my birth attested in proper form, by which you will see that I descend in a direct line from Gottlieb Conrad de Steinman, who was created a knight by the said sovereign. It was not until I had submitted to you proofs of the equality in point of rank that exists between us, that I could be bold enough to declare, as I now do, that I dare aspire to the hand of Miss, your daughter."

This pretension to equality of rank, on the part of a being whom he looked on as so infinitely his inferior, appeared to the marquis so extremely ludicrous, that in spite of his customary circumspection, and his weakness of

health, he could not check an ironical smile, as he replied with studied gravity—" M. Steinman, or M. de Steinman I should rather say, I am happy that you and I are on a footing of equality. In the time of the Jacobins and of the Cispadan republic, I became the equal of a crowd of people; but I had thought that since the formation of the Holy Alliance the sovereigns of Europe had at last discovered their true interests, and had in consequence restored the distinction of ranks. I see, however, that I was mistaken, and that you are noble, and of a nobility that ascends to the seventeenth century. Will you be so kind as to instruct me on this point;—do people that were ennobled at that time pass in Germany as belonging to the ancient *noblesse?* I suppose, of course, that they do."

This dry answer, and the disdainful tone in

which it was put, so different from the tone of politeness usually adopted by the marquis, appeared a bad augury to Steinman of the success of his application. He answered coldly, that before the dissolution of the German empire, there was a very marked distinction between the princes and the counts immediate, who had votes individually or collectively in the electoral diet, and mere gentlemen; but that since the congress of Vienna there existed no longer any difference between the different ranks of the German nobles.

"Such a rule is, in point of fact, the most reasonable," continued the marquis, in the same tone of sarcasm, "in a country where all derive their origin from a common source; as for myself, I protest to you, M. Steinman, that did you belong to one of those families of the chapter who can prove their sixteen quarters,

or even to one of those powerful courts or kings that furnish for contingent to the army of the emperor one whole footman, or one half horseman, my respect for your birth would not be in any measure greater than it is at present."

Steinman, whose individual as well as national pride were equally shocked by the marquis's observations, replied with sharpness—"Know, sir, since you seem ignorant of the fact, that no part of Europe furnishes a nobility more ancient and more uncontaminated by improper alliances than does Germany; and as to our great and royal houses, where will you find elsewhere, unless perhaps in France, princes who have reigned with more glory and with less interruption for so many ages?"

"That is indisputable," replied the marquis, with a sneering air: "for instance, what an

important part did not the County of the castle of Hapsburg act in the world only six centuries ago, and the lord of the little town of Hohenzollern Sigmaringuen: these are, I believe, the heads of two of the greatest monarchies in Germany. Then you have the royal house of Saxony, which is traced up to Wittikind; as if, forsooth, any mighty honour were derivable to the descendants of a savage warrior subdued by Charlemagne!"

He would have proceeded, but Steinman could no longer repress his rage. "And what, pray, are you, after all," cried he, red with passion, "to speak with so much contempt of crowned heads?"

"What am I!" said the old man, raising himself up by the two arms of his chair, and his eye sparkling with anger; "what am I!—a descendant of the masters of the world—one

of the offspring of the sovereign people—a patrician, escaped from the hands of the barbarians, and the destruction of civilisation. Nor is my family the only one that goes back to that glorious stem; Venice shuts within her walls many such, whose famous names, hardly altered by the lapse of ages, serve to attest their noble source. The Pisones, the Cornelii of history, still survive in her Pisani and her Cornare; Piedmont has her ancient Balbi, as Lombardy has her Varèzi, the sons of the great and unfortunate Varus. But, alas! why recall our titles of honour, in the state of abasement to which our country has sunk? Oh, hapless Ausonia! what a lot is thine! A prey from sea to sea to the stranger, thou countest among thy sovereigns the German, the Gaul, the Allobrogian, but not one Roman among the whole!"

As he pronounced these words he raised his eyes to heaven, and his glance lighting on the yellow crops that crowned the summit of the hills beyond the lake, he mournfully exclaimed, in the language of his native bard,

"Barbarus has segetes?—eheu!"

and wholly overcome with the melancholy contemplation, deep sighs burst from his breast, and large tears chased each other down his furrowed cheek.

Steinman was confounded on observing such an exalted burst of patriotism in the old man, and gazed on him for some minutes in silence, and without attempting an answer. At length the marquis, having dried his eyes, assumed a more subdued tone; for he had had leisure to consider what he had just uttered, and was sensible that his emotion had hurried him too

far. "What I have said of the German nobility," he went on, "M. Steinman, is by no means said with a view to lower them in comparison with the nobility of other modern nations, none of whom can boast of an origin more respectable. In France, for instance, the nobility (I do not speak of those plebeians who have been ennobled in mass by a charter of which I shall say nothing), the ancient nobility, who are so vain of their descent, what are they but a chaotic mixture of the Celtæ, the Galli, and the Teutones; that is, of savages and of slaves? In Spain, is it not well known that the blood of the greater portion of the proud hidalgos has coursed in the impure veins of infidel Moors or despicable Jews? And in England! but what are their lords, but an assemblage of Picts, Normans, and Welch? On the throne of Great Britain, I

confess, I see seated a noble and ancient race—the illustrious family of Brunswick, a younger branch of our house of Este. And you may perceive how highly the princes of England esteem their Italian origin, when the Queen of England has given to the palace in which she now resides, on the other side of the lake, the name of Villa d'Este. But, with this exception, what are the families of the sovereigns of the north? In Sweden, you have a plebeian general; and the autocrat of all the Russias, that powerful monarch, whose right hand touches the Vistula, and his left the great wall—whose armies are as brave and as disciplined as those of Alexander, and as numerous as those of Darius; what is he but the grandchild of one of the petty princes of Lower Germany?"

Steinman, seeing that the marquis had re-

sumed his habitual composure, now thought he might interrupt his harangue. "No one, marquis," said he, "is ignorant of the mighty conquests of the Romans, nor that Rome was the mistress of the world; but it would be but just to treat the nations of the north with somewhat less contempt, who vanquished the victors and subdued the conquerors." This was a home-thrust; and the marquis, instead of replying to it, was obliged to seek shelter in his erudition as in a strong hold. "Ah! sir," said he, "our misfortunes are known throughout the world; but if the barbarous hordes that violated the sacred territory of genius and of the arts have enriched themselves with our spoils, at least they ought not to boast of their success; we fell not but by our own fault. The overthrow of the Roman republic was owing to the discord of the citizens; and

the empire of the Cæsars was destroyed by the effeminacy arising out of an unbridled luxury. I can state my opinions on that melancholy subject with some confidence, for it has been the object of my constant meditations for thirty years past. I have proved to my own satisfaction, and I can show it to the conviction of any impartial man, that the evil arose principally from the changes that were introduced into the offensive armour of the Roman soldiers. The moment that it was seen fit to change the short sword, the formidable *gladius* for the long lance, borrowed from the Spaniards, all was lost.

" From that period our decadence is to be dated. It may in fact be easily supposed, that when the soldier must approach his enemy closely, in order to give effect to his blow, the slightest hesitation is dangerous, and the war-

rior even in his own defence must dart on his foe. Thence came the necessity, and thence the habit of boldness, that renders victory certain. Numerous examples prove this theory of mine; but the most curious assuredly is that which I have been fortunate enough to be the first to notice in a dissertation dedicated to the Royal Society of Antiquaries in London, who on that occasion did me the honour to admit me as a member of their learned body. I there established by measurement made of ancient monuments, that the cut-and-thrust sword —the terrible claymore of the brave Scotch highlanders, which rendered them invincible before they were acquainted with the gun or the bayonet, is precisely of the same length to a tittle as our *gladius;* the only difference, and that is a very trifling one, has respect to the breadth of the blade, which however was not by any means so

settled, as not to admit of variation. Yes, give us back the arms of the Scipios and of the Cæsars," said the old man, with a flourish of his hand, "and we shall be masters of the world still."

Whilst the marquis was thus dissertating on the immense advantages of the *gladius*, Steinman was thinking on Thomasine, and pondering in his head in what way he should bring back the conversation to the point whence it had set out, and from which it had now wandered so widely. With this view he thought it best to take advantage of an instant of pause, when the marquis, who had run himself out of breath, was obliged to stop, in order in his turn to take part in it. Being now perfectly aware of the extent of the old lord's pretensions, he was careful to say nothing that could possibly shock them, hoping by the submissiveness

of his future behaviour to regain the ground that he had lost.

" Sir," he proceeded, with an air of extreme deference, " your conjectures on the fall of the Roman empire and its causes appear to me to be in every respect as ingenious as they are plausible, and I entirely agree with you in opinion. I acknowledge also the great distance that separates in public consideration such illustrious families as yours, enriched by mighty historical recollections from those whom recent services have admitted to a participation in the honours of the state. The equality in the privileges of the two parties, of which I spoke, lies in nothing else. Even in our country, men distinguish between the great lord and the simple gentleman; and yet they are all distinguished by the generic name of nobles. We are in the

same situation as in the army, where the high dignity of commander-in-chief does not prevent us from giving to him who holds it, as we do to the lowest subaltern, the common title of soldier."

The marquis, by a sign of assent, signified that he was content to make this concession, and Steinman proceeded more boldly—

"It follows then, marquis, from this state of modern society, that there exists a species of confraternity among the several ranks of nobility; and that without neglecting the privileges of antiquity, advantages of a different kind are held to compensate for the want of it. It is on this principle that alliances are now-a-days formed. One man possesses fortune and an ancient origin, another has power and influence; one has judgment and experience, another youth and beauty."

It was impossible not to see the drift of this harangue; but the proposal of Steinman, under whatever form of insinuation presented, was not the less displeasing to the marquis. He was quite determined to refuse it; and yet, in the critical position in which he stood, he was obliged to have recourse to great management. He replied in consequence in general terms, but without anger, that it was not untrue that in modern times alliances had been contracted which would formerly have been deemed altogether unsuitable, and it was impossible to say where this levelling system might one day end. At length, when Steinman became more pressing, he was obliged to inform him that he had no intention of marrying his daughter at all, that she was yet very young, and had never contemplated any establishment; and he himself, moreover, being feeble and infirm, could not

dispense with those attentions which she paid to him with a tenderness which formed the only gratification of his life.

Steinman replied, that he had foreseen that objection, and that he would most willingly pledge himself beforehand never to occupy any other house, than that of the marquis, as his; and that the filial piety of Thomasine, which was a special recommendation in his sight, rendered him most anxious to share with her the fulfilment of a sacred task;—in a word, that it would be the endeavour of both to charm the weariness of his old age.

This previously-conned discourse was accompanied by every demonstration that was calculated to give it the appearance of sincerity; but neither the tone nor the demonstration produced the effect that Steinman seemed to expect. The marquis, after having thanked

him with somewhat constrained courtesy, willing to get rid as soon as possible of his importunate solicitations, stated that his resolution was irrevocable; and he thought he should be wanting in the respect that he felt to be due to him if he permitted him to indulge in any hopes which might interpose to prevent his forming an alliance with some one else, to whom his place and his personal advantages gave him a right to aspire.

So decided a refusal displeased Steinman to the highest degree, nor did he feel in any respect soothed by the obliging terms in which the marquis had couched it. Giving way to his habitual rudeness of character, which he always did when not restrained by his interest, he said, with an arrogant tone, that in the critical position in which the marquis stood in respect of the government, it was a most rash act

to refuse to listen to a means, as certain as it was honourable, of extricating himself from the predicament in which his imprudence had placed him, and that he must thank himself for any consequences of a disagreeable kind that might result from it. "As to myself, I have," said he, "but one course to follow—I will be either your son-in-law, or the most implacable of your enemies."

As he finished this speech, he rose abruptly and left the apartment, the door of which he slammed after him with a violence that made every room in the palace of Varèze echo again.

He had not reached the brink of the lake ere Thomasine had rejoined her father. She had waited with extreme impatience, or rather, she had watched for his setting out, less from a feeling of curiosity than from a wish to see

her father delivered from the presence of a man whose visits had caused him so great uneasiness. The moment the old man perceived her he held out his arms to embrace her—" Come, my child," said he, " and raise up the courage of your old father, who is sinking under the burden of persecution. Come, thou only support and consolation of my life !"

Thomasine tenderly returned the pressure, while the marquis continued—" Would you think it, my love, this police-officer, this German, has had the insolence to demand your hand ! Yes, and affecting, forsooth, a feeling of delicacy, he gave me back those bills which his agent yesterday extorted ; but it was only with a wish to ravish from me a good, which is a thousand times more precious."

At this alarming piece of intelligence Thomasine, seized with fear, remained mute and

trembling, a thousand different feelings confounding her—her recollections of La Cesia, the promise she had made to him—her love, her fears, by turns, shook her frame, and she could with difficulty sob out—"My father! my father! such a sacrifice is impossible!"

"And who, my child, requires it of you?" said the marquis, in a tone of indignation—"Could I—I, the last descendant of my noble race, give you over to an obscure, contemptible being such as he! How could you imagine such a thing?"

Poor Thomasine thought that now the favourable moment had arrived for making the confession, which for a long time had hung heavy on her breast; but the bashfulness inseparable from virgin innocence withheld her. While she was hesitating, the marquis went on—"Ah! rather than subscribe to such a

humiliation, I would lay down my life! and yet I cannot help shuddering when I think of the dreadful dungeons of Venice, with which those monsters dared to menace me. Nature revolts at the bare idea of such a punishment."

Whilst he pronounced these words, with deep and interrupted groanings, his alarmed daughter perceived that a cold sweat covered his brow and pallid cheeks; and at length sinking under the weight of his deadly apprehensions, he fell lifeless on the floor. The only concern of Thomasine when she saw her father in this state was to succour him, and she immediately despatched a messenger for the doctor to aid her in the task. When the marquis had recovered from his fainting fit, and when she beheld him somewhat calmed again, she withdrew to the oratory, and there prostrated at

the foot of the altar, and her mind wholly absorbed in her father's illness, and abandoning all consideration of her own sorrows, she prayed to Heaven for him alone.

CHAPTER IV.

STEINMAN, on his return to Como, found Schelme at his lodgings, waiting to give him an account of some pressing matters: as soon as these were discussed, he told his assistant, with a dispirited look, that his journey had not been a successful one. "There is one consolation," replied Schelme, "you pled your cause with a full pocket."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, the bills to be sure."

"Alas!" said Steinman, with a sigh, "they are no longer mine."

"And what have you made of them?"

Steinman now related with some embarrassment, and seeking at the same time to justify himself, the whole that had passed. When he had finished his story, Schelme replied, with that bantering tone that inferiors commonly assume when superiors, whose talents they despise, stand in need of their help—

"Egad, you have made a pretty kettle of fish! I grant that a pretty woman, with the near prospect of fifty thousand francs of rent, might well tempt you; but your ambition has destroyed you.—You should have thought of the sound old country proverb—better a bird in the hand than two in the bush. I got you a large sum of good money, which you might have kept without the least risk; and here,

without consulting a single soul, you have given every farthing of it up again! What do you intend to do next?"

"I don't know; all I know is, that I am most outrageously angry at the pride of that old rascal—that I am mortified by his refusal; and more in love with his daughter than I am either angry or vexed. Ah! could I but obtain her hand, there is no sacrifice I would not make. I would give a year's salary and the half of her portion!"

"The half! that is a swinging sum; but you are merely speaking for speaking's sake. Would you, in actual earnest, give ten thousand francs down on the nail to any one that should bring about this match?"

"I should be most happy to do so."

"You promise, then," continued Schelme, with an air of solemnity, and looking him

fixedly in the face, "that you'll pay down ten thousand francs the very day of the marriage?"

"The very day of the marriage;—that would be somewhat of the soonest."

"Ah, you hesitate; then if you think the sum over-much there is no ill done."

"No, I don't think so; but say five thousand francs on the marriage-day, and other five within the year that follows."

"Granted.—And if you fail your word?"

"Let me be crushed—hanged—damned!"

"I don't ask quite so much as all that; your bill to my order will be enough for me."

"You shall have it, my dear Schelme; and the terms shall be of your own dictating. But tell me, I beg of you, what means do you propose to employ? Not that I cannot entirely rely on your judgment."

"Then in that case do rely on it. Good bye—you shall hear news soon;" and he rushed out from a wish to avoid further explanation.

In fact, Schelme had but very vague hopes of success, and no settled plan of proceeding. The two rouleaux of napoleons, however, which had cost him so little difficulty, had given edge to his appetite; and he reckoned, besides, on the resources of his wit, which was ever fertile in expedients to overcome such obstacles as might obstruct his views. He did not attempt to hide from himself the extreme aversion that the marquis felt against the marriage, and the very slight impression that the love of such a man as Steinman had produced on Thomasine. But if the old man was proud, he had had proofs enough that he was easy to be intimidated; and hence he concluded that the dread of a severe imprisonment would not

fail to gain the day over his prejudices of birth. As to the consent of the young lady, he made extremely light of that.—"She is," said he to himself, "of an age when all girls are eager to be married: doubtless, if she had freedom to choose, she would take a sweetheart somewhat more youthful and captivating than Steinman; but there is nothing absolutely repulsive about the man, he will do very well for a husband. In fact," he went on soliloquising, "we might employ a little force without any risk, if it were called for. There is no fear of the family's having recourse to the justice of the sovereign, since, thanks to their imprudence, the police has them under its thumb. The pretext of the safety of the state will put down all complaints."

These reflections increased his confidence; and he resolved, without losing time, to accom-

plish an undertaking which was to be so very advantageous to him. This time, however, on his journey to Blevio, he thought best to take a couple of assistants along with him, two active and intelligent rascals, in order that while he was penetrating to the citadel they might reconnoitre the outworks of the place.

He had reached the quay with a view to bargain for a passage, when chance, which sometimes makes a sport of overturning empires, but which does not the less condescend to mingle in the affairs of petty individuals, thought meet that Doctor Scalpelli, the physician whose aid Thomasine had invoked, should be also at the quay ready to set out to visit his patient. Schelme, who happened to know him by sight, proposed that they should club for a boat, and his offer was accepted. Before, however, giving an account of the conversation

of these two worthy gentlemen, it is necessary that my readers should know who this personage, now first introduced to their notice, was.

Doctor Scalpelli was a little, middle-aged man ; his appearance had nothing extraordinary in it ; and the only remarkable feature in his face were two deep-set eyes, black, lively, and sparkling. His piercing glance announced both the habit and the power of keen observation. He had commenced his studies at Padua, and he had finished them at Pavia, under the celebrated Professor Scarpa. Anatomy, the fundamental basis of the curative science, had been the principal object to which he had applied himself ; and as he was endowed with great sagacity and much manual address, he speedily rose above the whole of his fellow-students in the art of dissection. His researches had been chiefly directed to the

nerves, the spinal marrow, the pineal gland, and the brain, generally; and he had had the good fortune to add to the important discoveries of Gall, in respect of those organs where the seat of thought is for the most part supposed to be placed. But this early success, as well as an inaugural thesis on the solar plexus, which he had defended with great applause on receiving his degree as a doctor, had been attended with fatal consequences to his moral system. Persuading himself in his arrogance that nature had no secrets unapproachable by him, he boldly denied the existence of that which he did not see; and this system, the fruit of misdirected vanity, conducted him by the straight road to materialism. He was even so bold as to say, in his cynical way, which the licentiousness of the times too much allowed, that if there was any such a

thing as a soul, it could not have escaped his investigation ; and he promised, if ever he happened to light upon it, he would not fail to inform his friends of the discovery.

This deplorable doctrine united with vicious inclinations, which the salutary restraints of religion could alone moderate, had made Scalpelli a man of the most corrupt morals, disposed at all times to sacrifice justice and honesty to the least of his interests. The only circumstance that checked his career was the dread of compromising his safety, and the desire to preserve his reputation untainted. He had succeeded pretty well in both those objects during the five years that he had passed at Milan after quitting the university. He was at that time attached to the *Spedale grande;* a superb establishment, which Lombardy owes to two holy bishops, whose beneficent piety

religion and humanity equally extol. In this splendid monument of their munificence, the number of the patients often amount to some thousands, especially at the season when the rice-fields exercise their malignant influence. So extensive a clinical school could not fail to favour the progress of the young doctor; but it modifies the character of those that attend it differently, or rather their natural dispositions do. Men who have received from Heaven a compassionate heart are here moved to increased pity by the aspect of so much suffering; their zeal is doubled, and their anxiety to relieve the unhappy patients rises to the highest summit to which the most honourable profession in society can pretend to inspire; but he, whose miserable inclinations have wrapped him up in petty selfishness, who beholds in the sick man nothing but an object on which to practice,

is hardened by the daily contemplation of his pains, and soon begins to consider with inhuman indifference the most horrible anguish and the most melancholy termination of the diseases he is called on to administer to. The medical science when so practised, or rather when so degraded, is nothing but a base and disgusting trade.

Scalpelli was one of those men without feeling and without honour, but he combined real and actual talent with the art of concealing his views under a deceitful exterior. He had even the art of gaining over by the semblance of commiseration the confidence of his wealthy patients, reserving the ruggedness of his merciless indifference for the poor, and for those from whom he had nothing to hope.

Such was the physician of the family of Varèze, with whom Schelme was now sailing

towards Blevio. We have said that this agent of the police was a skilful physiognomist. He imagined, and he was not deceived, that he saw in the expression of the little doctor the marks of a base and interested man, and he immediately concluded that he might possibly serve to forward his designs; he thought, however, that some circumspection would be necessary.

"The Marquis Varèze," said he, addressing Scalpelli, "is, as I am confidently informed, an old and wealthy valetudinary. The family of such a man must be a good job to you."

"Not so good as you might think: for, in the first place, though the father is ailing, the daughter is as fresh as a rose, and never has one hour's sickness; and then the fees, as you are aware, are very small in our country."

"I grant that; and what is infinitely worse,

the blockhead who kills you, or allows you to die when you might live, is paid as handsomely as the skilful physician who is learned in all the resources of his art."

"Ah, sir," replied the physician, with a smile of satisfaction, which proved that the bait had caught, "no man is infallible."

"But, by-the-bye, Doctor Scalpelli, are you at all aware that you may not keep the Marquis Varèze long?"

"Why, pray?"

"That," replied Schelme, with a mysterious look, "is a state secret; but as by your profession you ought to be a prudent man, I may state to you in confidence that the marquis has been so foolish as to connect himself with the enemies of the state, and that he runs a momentary risk of being dragged off to some castle or other; and if he were once there, God

only knows when he would come back again—or rather I may say, with so feeble health as his is, he would never return at all."

"Doubtless, if he were harshly treated; but, if they only left him his books and his papers, he would live wherever he was placed as comfortably as in his own house, which he very rarely quits."

This answer, which Schelme did not expect, obliged him to go back to the point whence he had set out, and to make a turn in order to get on again.

"However that may be," said he, "the marquis will unquestionably be arrested and put in prison; that is, if he do not accept of a proposal which would, I confess, extricate him completely from his embarrassment."

"In his place I should not hesitate; I would accept of any thing—any thing that keeps

a man from losing his liberty is advantageous."

"I think precisely as you do; but the old fool is wholly governed by the prejudices of his birth, forsooth."

"All noblemen are so."

"He refuses a most suitable marriage for his daughter with a man whose credit would save him from every risk."

"That is most unreasonable."

"Stop," said Schelme, after a minute of pretended reflection, "an idea has just come into my head:—why, doctor, I dare say you might arrange this matter to the satisfaction of all concerned. All you have to do is to make a strong representation to the marquis of his utter inability to support the fatigue of a long journey, and still less the rigour of a state-prison. I know him well, his character is

feeble, easy to be intimidated; fear will make him agree to any thing."

"That is all possible enough," replied Scalpelli; "but family affairs are what no one has any right to meddle with."

This negative response would have cut short farther treaty had it been pronounced with the decisive tone of an honest man; but Schelme was too knowing a fellow not to conclude, from the irresolute tone and air of the doctor, that his only reason for laying down this principle was to get a higher fee for the violation of it, to which he was quite willing to consent. He went on, therefore, to observe, "that the rule was doubtless a good one in ordinary cases; but that in the case which they were discussing, to insure tranquillity to the poor marquis for the remainder of his days, it mattered not by what means, would be the most valuable service that

could possibly be rendered to him. The whole of his family could not fail to be grateful for it. And so true is that which I now tell you," said he, lowering his voice and applying his mouth to the doctor's ear, " that the son-in-law who is to be, were the marriage to be effected by your interposition, would turn you out a hundred napoleons as a wedding present."

" I have no need of any such compliment to decide my conduct," replied the doctor in the same tone, " if it could be proved to me that I ought to follow such a line of conduct."

" Let us come to the point at once," said Schelme, interrupting him with a tap on the shoulder; " your doubts, doctor, have reference chiefly to the performance of the promise: in such affairs writings can hardly be exchanged, but we may give an earnest-penny;" and while he said this, he slipped into Scalpelli's hand

five napoleons. The latter took them, and replied in a sententious manner—

"Words, my friend, in their nature are but wind, but gold can bestow stability on them. Reckon on me; but learn, at the same time, that when I act on your views, I do so only because they appear to me most lawful: for, were they not so, nothing would tempt me for a moment to entertain them."

"And I," replied Schelme, with a face of equal gravity, "in such a case, would be very far from making any such a proposal to you; I have too much esteem for your character."

Their falsehood was mutual; but it is no rare sight to see those who are utterly destitute of any sense of shame pretending that they are incapable of crimes to which, at the moment, their interest does not happen to tempt them.

When these two worthies had agreed on the terms of their bargain, they employed the remainder of the passage in concerting between them the means of conducting it to a successful issue. Arrived at Blevio, they separated; and Schelme took up his quarters at the inn, while Scalpelli went on to the Palace Varèze. He found, as he expected, the marquis rather uneasy than seriously ill. After feeling his pulse, which was somewhat hard, but which indicated no fever, he made a sign to Thomasine of evil omen, which alarmed her above measure. When they were alone together, he told her that there was no immediate danger; but repose, and above all things, an entire abstinence from all agitating thoughts was indispensable to ward off the severe malady, whose threatening seeds he very distinctly perceived. At the time, he contented himself with ordering a

soothing draught, and some of those innocent antispasmodics that operate more on the imagination than on the physical organs; and he added, that he would return at an early hour next morning, as he feared some fresh accession of fever during the night. Thomasine, in terror at this declaration, pressed him strongly to remain for the night at the palace; an arrangement to which he consented with some appearance of reluctance; repeating several times during the evening to the marquis and to his daughter the absolute necessity, in the condition in which the former was then situated, of avoiding every description of agitation, which might be attended with extreme danger and, by consequence, of guarding with the utmost care against every thing that had the slightest tendency to excite it. He well knew that such advice, which it depended only on themselves

to observe, would only redouble the extreme anxiety under which they were then suffering. Yet the end of the day came, and passed much more comfortably than the doctor had in his assumed fears given reason to suppose it would. And when the hour of bed-time came, having first examined the pulse of the sick man once more, he declared that he foresaw nothing troublesome in the case, and accordingly next morning he would set out at an early hour, and would not repeat his visits unless specially sent for.

CHAPTER V.

THOMASINE, somewhat comforted in respect of her father's health by the last words of the doctor, retired to her chamber to take some repose. She had need of it; for during two entire nights she had not laid down on her bed, and she had suffered extremely from agitation of mind as well as fatigue of body. Ever since the fatal visit of Steinman, she had not ceased to tremble for the liberty and even for the life of the author of her days.

So mournful anticipations in respect of her father had stifled whatever uneasiness she might have felt from other causes; but love, which had taken refuge in the bottom of her heart, had lost none of its energy; and the moment that sleep came to calm a portion of her griefs, the image of La Cesia presented itself to her eyes. He looked sorrowful, lowring, and angry: she advanced towards him, and sought to appease his irritation; when suddenly the same dream that had on a former occasion alarmed her was reproduced before her eyes. Again the agents of police attempted to seize him; but on this occasion the individual with whom La Cesia struggled was the odious Steinman. Her agony was at its height, when she was awoke by a loud and repeated knocking at the door of the palace, which made the whole mansion shake again. At this noise she

arose, and running to the window, beheld below a group of men, some of whom were armed; and at the brink of the lake she discerned, by the gleaming of their torches, a close shallop, covered with black cloth in the same way as the Venetian gondolas are. In a short time she heard the voice of Schelme, who, in a tone of authority, commanded the door to be opened in the name of his majesty the emperor. She immediately arose, hastily huddled on her garments, and proceeded to her father's apartment, whither she was soon followed by the officer; who, on his entering the room, stated that he was charged to arrest the Marquis Varèze, and to carry him off immediately.

"Whither do you purpose to conduct him?" exclaimed Thomasine.

"I know nothing of that; the order that I

bear calls on me to see him conveyed on board a covered shallop, which is to carry him to Lecco, the boundary of the district; from Lecco he will probably be conveyed to Venice, to the prison where the other conspirators are at present confined."

"Sir," said the marquis with a trembling voice, "it is impossible to undertake so long a voyage without some preparation. You must at least allow me time to take some changes of linen, some clothes, and to arrange my papers."

"You have had reason to expect this visit for a long time past; if you are not prepared, assuredly you might have been. We must be quick. If you are in any difficulty, my fellows are expeditious rascals—they'll bundle off both you and your baggage in the turn of a hand."

Thomasine on hearing this burst into tears; and her father, thunderstruck by so fatal a blow,

to which he looked forward as possible indeed, yet still distant, was incapable of uttering a single word. At that moment the doctor entered the apartment; he had been roused by the clatter, and had been in such haste to come down stairs, that he had forgot even to remove his night-cap.

"What means all this?" said he, looking to the marquis. "Ah, sir, what has happened? what a difference I find in your present state from that in which I left you!" Schelme then shortly explained the subject of his visit; which heard, Scalpelli replied in a firm and decisive tone—"I must inform you, sir, that the Marquis Varèze shall not quit the house, at least at this moment; I am certain he could not reach Venice alive."

"Ha! who the devil are you," retorted Schelme with a loud and angry voice, "that

thus dare to oppose the formal orders of the sovereign?"

"Sir, I am a doctor of the University of Pavia, a practitioner of medicine in the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom, by virtue of the imperial license. I am quite aware of the duties imposed upon me as a faithful subject, and never shall I encourage any one to offer resistance to lawful authority; but neither shall I fail in the duty I owe to my profession, and therefore I here declare that you must hold yourself responsible for the consequences of your present proceedings: the life of the marquis will be endangered if he be taken from home in the state of extreme weakness in which he now is."

"Mr. Doctor," replied Schelme, "we might attend to your representations were this a case of private wrong or of ordinary criminality, but

you must be aware that in state-matters no consideration can suspend the execution of an order emanating from the supreme authority." So saying, he took out his watch, and addressing Thomasine, "Miss," said he, "I shall allow you half an hour to make ready for this journey, and to bid farewell to your father."

The word "farewell" roused Thomasine from the state of stupor into which she had sunk, and advancing towards Schelme, she exclaimed, in an almost menacing tone—"What! bid farewell to my father! how dare you propose such a thing? No, 'tis not imprisonment that shall cause me to do so; I will follow him whithersoever he goes, and death alone shall tear me from him."

Schelme replied to this, that none but the marquis was included in the order, and he could allow no one whatever to go along with

him; and at any rate the boat was too small: there was room only for the prisoner, the boatmen, and the two guards who had it in charge not to lose sight of him.

"Well, then," cried Thomasine, in accents of despair, and driven to distraction by this announcement, "I will wade after him until the waves swallow me up!"

While she threw herself into the arms of the fainting old man, the doctor thought it a proper opportunity of again interposing. "You see, sir," said he to Schelme, "what a dreadful effect the mere announcement of this order has already produced on the two objects of it; what then may not be feared from an attempt to put it into execution? I insist on your allowing them time to recover themselves."

"That is what I will not do. Write a pre-

scription for your patient, doctor, we shall take it along with us."

"That then is all you'll do?" answered Scalpelli, raising his voice. "Well, sir, since it must be so, I here declare to you, that I shall set out this moment for Milan—that I shall proclaim your conduct to our just and humane viceroy there, to whom I am personally known. You will then, perhaps, discover the inutility of your present argument—that the security of the state is to be consulted before any thing else; and that that which is to be consulted before even the security of the state, is the dictates of humanity. To suppose the contrary, would be to libel the well-known views of our king and of his august representative. You are well aware, sir, that the meanest subject has ready access to those princes; and I shall not fail to acquaint his imperial highness that you have refused to

comply with the formal requisition of a regularly licensed physician; and doubt not, my friend, that the least you will get for your pains will be a reprimand instead of thanks; and should any thing happen to the marquis on his journey, punishment or deprivation of office is the least you may look for."

These words, pronounced with a degree of heat that bordered on indignation, appeared to produce some impression on the officer; he hesitated, and at length consented to suspend the execution of the order until the arrival of Steinman, who, he said, would be there in a few hours in order to affix his seal to the marquis's papers. In the interim he withdrew, leaving the marquis, without witnesses, at full liberty to confer with the doctor and with his afflicted daughter.

The boldness and decision displayed by Scal-

pelli on behalf of her father, had inspired Thomasine with the liveliest sense of esteem and gratitude; and the marquis on his side looking on him as his most zealous friend, and placing all his hopes in him, proceeded immediately to relate to him all that had taken place from the fatal day on which the two agents of police had so unexpectedly arrived at Blevio. He told him how Schelme had made a sort of pecuniary arrangement of the matter with him: which compromise Steinman had only renounced for the purpose of substituting a proposal of marriage with his daughter; a proposal which was altogether inadmissible. The doctor interrupted the old man here to ask if he had thought of any other means of extricating himself. "Alas! I know of none," said the old man with a deep groan, "at least, unless these wretches should consent to renew

the negotiation they have broken off, to accept the money again, and leave me at peace."

"That is what we must endeavour to bring them to, Doctor Scalpelli," said Thomasine eagerly, "and the interest that you have expressed for us satisfies me that you will employ in this negotiation all the resources of your excellent understanding. You are master of the conditions, let nothing stop you; promise all I possess, the entire property I inherit from my mother:—what, alas! would I not part with to save my father?"

"I am much afraid," said Scalpelli, shaking his head, "that as matters are now situated an arrangement is out of the question; even though these gentlemen were willing to go into it, they have no longer power to do so. The government is informed of the matter, and the revocation of the order does not depend on them.

However, it is but a trial; your present position is so bad, that no trial can wel l make it worse."

At this moment word was brought that Steinman had arrived, and Scalpelli instantly quitted the room in order to wait upon him. He found him with Schelme, who, as soon as he saw him, burst into a fit of laughter; and seizing the doctor's hand, and presenting him to the inspector-general—"Here," said he, "is the best actor in the whole country. Egad, you almost made me afraid, so very naturally did you express your intention of denouncing me to the viceroy."

"I was exceedingly well disposed to do so, and I am so still," replied Scalpelli in a severe tone, withdrawing his hand from the grasp of the officer. "I could not behold, without being much affected, the spectacle of this wor-

thy family in such deep distress; and I was shocked at the harshness with which you, sir, thought proper to treat two persons whom from my soul I cannot believe to be very guilty."

"Ha!" cried Schelme, withdrawing a couple of paces in surprise, and casting on the speaker a wild look, "what! have you forgot our agreement? Where," he pursued, in an accent of marked astonishment, "is the bargain we concluded yesterday, Master Doctor?"

"I have not forgotten what passed yesterday," said the other in reply; "but such bargains are not irrevocable."

"And the five napoleons?"

"Are here," said Scalpelli, pulling them from his pocket, and, seeing that Schelme hesitated to take them back, he tossed them with contempt on the table. Then turning to Steinman, who was struck dumb with wonder at this

procedure—" Sir," he continued, in a cold tone, " when this agent of yours spoke to me on this affair, and begged me to second his projects, I consented, on the supposition that the resistance of the father to the proposed alliance arose solely out of his prejudiced notions about birth and rank, all which I look on as extremely unreasonable; but it has now come to my knowledge that the young lady has no less aversion than her father has to such a match, and I myself in consequence am equally opposed to compelling one of the wealthiest heiresses of our country to become your wife contrary to her own inclinations."

Steinman was disconcerted by this declaration, nor did he know upon what principles to explain so unexpected a change of opinion. He replied, with an embarrassed air, that his

views were strictly honourable; that he had no other intention than to render the daughter of the marquis as happy as he possibly could by his union with her; and that, therefore, he could not see why one who really took an interest in the family should interfere to obstruct his wishes.

"I hope, at least, doctor," added the inspector-general, in an almost deprecatory tone, "that, having promised to lend me your aid and advice, you will not go so far as to attempt to do me any dis-service."

During this colloquy Schelme had closely and keenly watched the expression of Scalpelli's countenance with his lynx eyes, and he had been specially struck with the emphatic manner in which he uttered the words *rich* heiress. This was an immediate clue to him; and certain

that he had penetrated the real intentions of the interested practitioner—

" I am astonished, doctor," said he, " that a man of your wit and talent should pay attention to such petty griefs as those we have witnessed. How can you possibly seek to attach more importance to the caprice and coquetry of a young woman, than you do to the prejudices of an old man? What you should look to as a man of sense, is the certainty of fingering a reward proportioned to the service, which the peculiar circumstances in which you and he are placed, give you the power of performing for M. Steinman. His intention, as I told you in his name, was to make you a present of a couple of thousand francs; but, upon reflection, he has considered that that sum was not in fair proportion to the fortune of his in-

tended bride ; and he was just telling me, at the moment you came in, that he had made up his mind to come down with four thousand."

" I would not accept of ten thousand," replied the doctor, looking alternately to Steinman and to Schelme, in order to see what would be the effect on the pair of so considerable a demand.

Steinman bit his lips, a slight degree of redness passed over his cheeks, and he was about to exclaim against it, when Schelme made him a sign to repress his anger, and hastily replied—" What ! ten thousand francs ! egad, that is a swinging sum ; and especially if you consider this, the fortune is not money down on the nail ; we must wait a long time perhaps before the old father slip away."

" Why so long ?" answered the doctor ; " he

is an old man; and besides—:" he said no more; but his ominous eye spoke the dark and atrocious purpose that then flitted before his depraved thoughts: then, fearing to go too far, he continued to address the pair—"Before," said he, "entering on any arrangement, we must first of all ascertain the mode of payment that is proposed. Are the funds ready? Is the sum in cash?"

"That," replied Steinman, sharply, "is not to be supposed."

"And why not?" replied Scalpelli, with an ironical sneer; "surely you draw enough of the ready from us!"

"The government leaves, notwithstanding, a very small portion in the hands of its agents; but I shall not refuse any kind of security that you may require."

"Well, then, you shall grant me a bill for ten thousand francs, payable six months hence, for money lent to you."

"But what if the marriage don't take place?"

"It shall take place if I say it shall."

This answer, pronounced in the tone of a man who is certain of what he promises, decided Steinman; he seized a pen, wrote out the bill, and delivered it to Scalpelli. The latter, after receiving it, pointed out to Schelme the five napoleons that were still lying on the table, and gave him a sign to pick them up; adding, in a muttering tone, as he left the room, "I did not think there was as much brains in an Austrian scull."

He immediately returned to Thomasine, who awaited his approach with extreme anxiety. His countenance announced nothing favour-

able. "Are we lost, indeed?" said she to him; "must we undertake that dreadful journey from which my father will never return?"

"Steinman, I find, has still the power of preventing it; the order for the arrest does not proceed from Milan, as I imagined: he has merely filled one of those blank orders that are committed to the custody of the superior officers of police. But the price that he puts on the arrangement renders it impossible."

"What! won't my fortune satisfy him? What would he have besides?"

"Your hand."

"Great God! and is it come to this?" exclaimed she, bursting into tears.

"I offered him money, but he refused it; and not without a show of reason. He could not accept of any thing without the risk of being compromised."

"You must tell him—that—my father—has an invincible repugnance to any such a proposal."

"He is aware of that; but he insisted, nevertheless, that the marquis would consent if you would: and he added, 'if she truly love her father, she will consent to this sacrifice, since it is only by it she can insure his repose, or even save his life.'"

"Cruel man," replied Thomasine, sobbing; "if I love my father! yes, I do love my father, and I will prove it to him. Go back, sir; tell him I consent to be——." She could not finish the sentence. At length, collecting all her strength, she added—"May the curse of Heaven alight and rest on his head if he deceive me, and if he yet persist in persecuting my father!"

"Fear it not, he will not act against his own

interest. Your marriage will guarantee for ever the tranquillity of the whole family."

"Well, it is all over.—Go, sir; and I—I shall proceed to render back to my father the life I received from him!"

It was impossible that this sublime effort of filial piety should not produce some impression on the physician; he was moved. Vice blunts, but does not absolutely destroy sensibility: for a moment he even grieved at the guilty part he was acting; but the vile craving cupidity, his predominant passion, checked in its first commencement his nascent remorse; and striving to stifle it effectually, he exclaimed to himself—"After all, why should I be so much grieved for a fate that is so common? If she marry this thick-pated German, she can e'en console her *ennui* by taking to herself a lover as other dames are wont to do."

So he spoke, but he was not convinced by his own sophistry; for there was a celestial purity in the character of Thomasine that forbade the vile supposition.

CHAPTER VI.

When Thomasine returned to her father, she found him in a most deplorable condition, equally languishing in spirit and enfeebled in body. "Be of courage, my dear father," said she affectionately, and endeavouring to call up a smile, "we shall not quit the palace."

As she spoke, a ray of joy lit up the almost closed eyes of the old man. "Then," said he, "they have consented to a new bargain? It will be a hard one, no doubt."

"A hard one, indeed," cried Thomasine, with a deep and prolonged sigh.

"But then, my dear, nothing is dearer than life; and truly mine was at stake here."

"I thought so; and I have purchased it accordingly."

"You did well, my child; but tell me, what do you propose to give to that avaricious man?"

Thomasine, for some time, could not find words to reply to her father's heart-rending question; at length, with an effort at calmness, she said—"Father, I have given in exchange for yours the life that you first bestowed on me."

"Explain your meaning," replied the marquis eagerly, who began to see into the dreadful truth: "what have you done? my fortune I can give up; I can strip me of my posses-

sions; but, my daughter, my blood, the honour of my family!—Break, child, break the odious compact, and let me part hence; I will part." In pronouncing these words he attempted to rise from his chair; but he sunk back, as if exhausted with the combined workings of indignation and despair.

"You see, father," said Thomasine, pressing the cold and trembling hand of the old man within hers, "you are not in a state to execute that generous resolution; your strength is not equal to your courage. I must now assume your place; your season of trials is gone by."

"My daughter—my dear daughter," said the marquis, melted even to tears, "do you imagine I can consent to prolong my sorrowful existence at the expense of thy happiness and thy life?"

"None was ever miserable in the performance

of their duty; and besides, if I do experience sorrow, the thought that you are spared the pangs that I feel shall be my consolation. Believe me, my dear father, far from ever regretting the sacrifice on which I have determined, I should most willingly undergo, to secure you comfort, as much every day of my life. I may have indulged wishes of a different kind—I may have conceived hopes that are now most vain—but," she added, wiping away her tears, and looking up to heaven, "if I stand in need of aid to confirm my strength, I know where to seek for it—where it was never sought in vain!"

"And the benediction of thy father," exclaimed the marquis, folding her in his arms, "will render Heaven propitious to thy prayer. But I cannot even contemplate so horrible an idea; I cannot consent to forego my hopes.

Why not try once more? Scalpelli has both acuteness and firmness of purpose; but these are not enough to insure success in so delicate a negotiation: address is as necessary as either. Perhaps he has not expressed with sufficient plainness to the man the utter repugnance that both of us entertain to the odious marriage that he proposes. If he be a person of the slightest feeling of delicacy, that will be sufficient to induce him to renounce his entreaties."

"But what if he be utterly destitute of delicacy?" replied Thomasine, sorrowfully.

"In that case I have a means that promises immediate success. The five hundred Venetian zechins that I myself buried in the cellar at the commencement of the revolution are still there; I will give them up to him. Is not that a handsome bribe? I will sell my medals; yes, my whole collection. It is the fruit of

twenty years' toil and research, and contains some most precious specimens, many of them unique; but I care not, I shall part with them for any price that may be offered. Let me have ready money, I am content; and when I am fortified with that powerful, that irresistible argument, I shall treat with Steinman. In fact, at bottom, I think he is right. Orders, bills of exchange, might not be paid; or they might ultimately give rise to inquiries, to discoveries, perhaps, of a very troublesome character, whereas money leaves no traces behind it; never does it compromise or betray its possessor. A negotiation founded on such a basis may perhaps succeed, and I shall at any rate attempt it immediately."

"Doubtless we risk nothing by that," replied Thomasine; "but recollect the wise counsel of your physician, he dreads every thing that may

occasion violent emotion; let me act in your stead; and it is besides better that I should in my own person frankly and sincerely, though as gently as I can, confess to him the absolute aversion I entertain for him."

"Follow the dictates of your heart, my child, I place my destiny in your hands."

He could not assuredly have acted more prudently; but Thomasine, on quitting him, found herself too much agitated to see Steinman that night. She was compelled to put off the interview until next day, and she charged Scalpelli to inform Steinman of her intention. In the mean time, she sought earnestly to compose her mind to calmness, when a sudden thought infused into her bosom a new source of trouble. She had adopted, without hesitating, the generous resolution of saving her father at the sacrifice of her dearest

hopes, although she felt at the moment, and that most deeply and feelingly, the extent of the price that her filial affection prompted her to pay. But now a conscientious scruple came to disturb her resolves, and to increase the grief that they had caused her. How far, she asked herself, was she bound by the solemn promise that she had given to La Cesia? Were the circumstances of her present condition so imperious, as to justify her in breaking through, by a single act of her will, an engagement so sacred, without the consent of the party to whom it had been made? This was a question of delicate resolution, on which she was afraid to venture; for she was aware of the difficulty of deciding in a case where her heart was so deeply interested. In this perplexity, the sentiments that ruled in her heart determined her to have recourse to the counsels of religion, and to seek

the advice of the vicar of Torno, a venerable ecclesiastic, who had enjoyed the confidence of her mother, and had been present when she breathed her last. This was, she thought, as far as it was now in her power replacing that maternal care of which she was now unhappily deprived. Without losing time, she made the boat be got ready, and directed her course to the mansion of the clergyman, built on a little arm of the lake close to the bank, and by the side of the church of which he was the head. Vespers were scarcely finished; and the vicar, instead of returning to his room, had climbed up to the tower, which served as a belfry. Travellerswh o visit Lombardy never fail to be struck with the singular elegance of structures of that kind in Upper Lombardy. They are commonly lofty square towers, of the finest proportions: the architecture is modern; the

ornaments simple, and in excellent taste. Near the top of them, a double arcade that runs round the tower affords a passage for the sound of the bell, which sometimes project from the surface; the summit is not terminated by the gothic peak that we have borrowed from snowy countries, but it is surmounted by a platform, which is a certain indication of a temperate clime. At Torno, in addition to this, there has been constructed on the level top a handsome octagon pavilion, which might serve as a model for a Belvidere to a summer residence. From this height may be seen, in its whole length, the western branch of the lake; and the view is only bounded by the high Alps, whose snowy summits tower above the chain of verdurous hills that border the lake. In the north-west, through a cleft that seems expressly made for that purpose, in the screen of the

lower mountains, appear the nearer and more picturesque group of hills of the canton of Tesino. The foreground of the landscape is as smiling and soft as the distant view is grand and imposing.

For thirty years had this delightful prospect charmed the eyes of the good old pastor of Torno; and yet every day that he gazed upon it opened to him some fresh charm — some previously undiscovered beauty. To minds at peace with themselves, custom gives an inexpressible sweetness even to pleasures that are of daily recurrence. It was in order the better to enjoy the lovely view that, after even prayer, whenever the horizon was pure and serene, he was wont to climb to the top of the tower; where the admiration inspired by so lovely an assemblage of his works, naturally led the mind of the pious man to the contemplation of the

great Author. He had formed the pavilion into a sort of sacred observatory. Above, a sort of rustic desk was placed, a crucifix of ebony, between two pictures representing religious subjects—these decorated the white-washed wall; and on a table in front of the principal window lay his bible, and his breviary placed at the foot of a telescope, which was sufficiently powerful to enable him to discern the fishermen in their boats as they approached the land; and he even pretended that he could, when the weather was perfectly serene, distinguish the dial-hand of the clock of Como cathedral.

The venerable old man took a tender interest in the daughter of the Marchioness Varèze; and beholding her pale and sunken, he asked her affectionately what was the matter with her, and why her roses had lost their hue.

"Father," replied Thomasine with a sigh, "many and great griefs, and evils yet greater in prospect than those I now suffer, have destroyed the peace of my soul. I am come to implore your advice, and to commend myself to your prayers."

She then proceeded to tell him with all the candour of innocence, but with the hesitation inseparable from such a communication, in what manner she had pledged her faith.

When her story was done the vicar, who had listened with deep attention, replied—"My child, when honour makes a promise, it gives a gift indeed; but honour cannot part with what does not appertain to it. At your age, the disposal of your hand is not in your own power: law, reason, and of consequence religion, permit it not. Your promise, therefore, is null and void; but as it would be

most unjust that the person who contracted that unlawful enjoyment along with you should believe himself bound by it, when you are not so, it is your duty to announce to him that you have discovered your error."

"I will do so," replied poor Thomasine, groaning in spirit, "since it is my duty; but how will he support so terrible an infliction? And how can I think to survive it?"

"Doubtless, if you ask for power to enable you to do so from Him who never refuses the prayer of the fervent and the sincere, you will receive it. And think, besides, my child, think of the magnificent promises that are held out to those who suffer! For a few days of sorrow they are promised an eternity of joy! Ah!" said he, elevating at the same time his eyes to the sky, which at the moment was lighted up with the rays of a lovely sunset, "I think I

can even now behold, behind yon cloudy curtains of purple and of gold, that holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, shining with light and with glory, where felicity without end and without measure even now awaits the just."

In pronouncing these words, the old man appeared as if entranced in ecstasy; tears of pleasure moistened his eyelids, and his look shone with a gleam of the joys that his holy hope led him to anticipate. Thomasine partook of his feelings, and sinking on her knees by his side—"Pray for me, father," said she, "pray for me, and I shall be heard!"

"Yes," replied he, with unaffected simplicity, "I will pray for you and with you, my child; I have ample room to pray for you: for my prayer, so far as I am concerned, is but an offering up of thanks. I am an old man, it is true, but what have I to ask of my God? un-

less that he may continue to me the use of my eyes to gaze on the wonders of the creation, and keep within me a heart capable of loving the Creator."

Thomasine received the benediction of the vicar, and retired more calm, or at least less oppressed than she came. Nothing was indeed changed in her condition; but the serenity that is inspired by religion is contagious, and pious and tender minds experience its communicated influences. To such communications it would seem that Heaven has accorded a consoling virtue which softens grief and blunts sorrow.

CHAPTER VII.

THE moment at length arrived that was to fix the fate of Thomasine. The interview that she had solicited with Steinman took place in the presence of Scalpelli; and such is the ascendancy of virtue, that her countenance remained firm and calm during the whole of its continuance, while the utmost embarrassment was discoverable in that of her oppressor. In vain did he seek confidence by his attempt to put on an air of tenderness and passion; the

constraint that it imposed on him only rendered his natural awkwardness the more conspicuous. At length he broke silence, and addressing the noble girl—"May I hope then, miss," he began, "that you will really deign to fulfil my ardent wishes?"

"My fate," replied she, with a sigh, "is in your hands; I have no longer any hope but in your generosity."

"Ah! madam, ask, or command rather, what you will, you will find me ever ready to anticipate your meanest wishes. I solemnly pledge myself to this before the doctor here, our mutual friend."

"He knows, and he must have told you, that I consent to this union with extreme repugnance; my feelings in that respect are deeply seated, and can *never* change," she added, laying a strong emphasis on never; "my sense

of duty alone, and the necessity of snatching my father from an imprisonment that cannot but cause his death, have determined me to this sacrifice. It is to me very painful to declare this to you, but the sincerity of my character compels me to be so plain."

Steinman blushed with vexation; that a declaration so positive should be made in the presence of a third party rendered it the more mortifying. "Madam," he at length replied, "I do not flatter myself that I shall, at the very first, be capable of inspiring you with the same affection that I myself feel, but I hope to possess your esteem in proving that I am not unworthy of your love; and time and custom may at length lead to softer sentiments."

"It is in your power, and in yours alone," interrupted Thomasine, eagerly, "to make me this moment the happiest of beings. Take as

a gift, a farewell offering, every farthing of my fortune; cheerfully, irrevocably shall it be given, and with it my sincere, my eternal gratitude."

"What you propose is impossible, even though I were willing to consent to it; but were I already master of that fortune, which with so much generosity you offer me, I protest to you I would renounce the half of it sooner than give up the possession of its mistress."

"What happiness is to be anticipated," exclaimed Thomasine, giving way to an emotion of indignation at this speech, "from the possession of a person who—"—she checked herself, unwilling so much to irritate the man before her; and added, after a momentary pause—"who cannot share it with you?"

Nothing less than the most sublime feeling of virtue could have enabled her thus to

restrain her expressions within the limits of moderation; though she had reason to dread lest the anger of a man equally destitute of principle and delicacy should be roused by her declaration to break off every species of arrangement, and to persecute anew the father she adored; and that fear also led her to soften her expressions so as not to render them so repulsive as they otherwise might have been. "Be assured, sir," she continued, "that I shall not deem the life of my father purchased at too high a price, whatever the price may be. You will meet from me neither complaints nor lamentations; and these involuntary tears," dashing from her eyes the drops that despair notwithstanding her courage had collected there, "shall be the last that you shall ever behold me shed."

"Fear nothing," replied Steinman, with a

look which he was anxious to make appear loving, but which was mingled with a sort of German stiffness which rendered him even more hateful than before; "you deserve to be happy, and with me you shall be so."

Hitherto Scalpelli had been a silent witness of this scene; but his heart smote him for favouring from vile considerations of interest a union which the mere consideration of moral causes yet more than conventional propriety rendered so utterly unsuitable for both parties. He was at length moved to pity the poor victim before him; and addressing Steinman—"Sir," said he, "you have declared your wish to please the lady. I am fully assured that at this moment nothing will more contribute to her pleasure than to put an end to this painful and now purposeless interview, and to allow her to return to her father."

Steinman yielded to this recommendation with a readiness for which he sought to take credit in the eyes of his mistress; and Thomasine immediately withdrew, in order to inform her father of the bad success of her endeavours; adding, at the same time, that she was perfectly resigned to her fate. The old man attempted in vain to combat her resolution; irrevocably determined on her line of conduct, she employed as much earnestness to obtain his consent as if her happiness had depended on it; she even went so far as to declare that she would never espouse another. The marquis had not power to resist a love so sublime and so devoted; he called Scalpelli, and committed to his charge the arrangements for the marriage. He stipulated at the same time for the insertion of a clause in the contract, by which it should be provided, "that if there were any

male issue of the marriage he should bear the name and arms of the house of Varèze, with the addition of a broken —— at the top of the shield."

Steinman consented to every thing that was required of him; and such is the power of prejudice, that we are not sure the old marquis, all overwhelmed with sorrow as he was, did not experience a degree of real enjoyment from a silly provision dependent on remote contingency, and equally useless and ridiculous, had it been as certain as it was precarious.

Thomasine made no demands—no exactions: all she asked was, that in every thing connected with the ceremony the most absolute simplicity should be studied.

When the fatal day arrived people wondered to see her: instead of proceeding with bent

down eyes, and that bashfulness of demeanour which had so distinguished her among her companions, she walked with her eyes raised to heaven, as if there she sought to read the colour of her future destiny. Sad, but not cast down, her step resembled in its firmness the description given by historians of the tread of the pure virgins of the primitive church when proceeding to receive the crown of martyrdom; their hearts upheld and sustained in meekness and devotedness by the singleness of their conscience and the sincerity of their belief. It was not to the cross that Thomasine was advancing, it was to the hymeneal altar; yet, had the alternative been submitted to her, much would she have preferred a death sudden and severe to the long and painful hopelessness that awaited her, in a union at which her heart revolted. When called on to make

the fatal response—" Yes," she uttered it with a loud voice, but so altered was its quality from that of her ordinary tone, that it was unintelligible. She spoke no more from that moment; but maintained a melancholy silence, so absolute and so long continued, that fears were entertained lest her reason should yield to her sufferings. In reconducting his bride from the chapel, Steinman perceived with alarm that her hand was cold and rigid; he gazed on her face, and beheld her lips pale and tremulous, and her eyes half shut and without expression; so striking and inconceivable was the change that a few minutes had operated, that instead of a blooming wife, in the flower of her youth and beauty, it appeared as if he had united himself to an animated corpse.

It was impossible that the health of Thoma-

sine should not give way under a series of shocks so violent in their nature. The very day after her marriage she was seized with a dangerous sickness, and for some time her life was in imminent danger. The strength of her constitution, however, and her youth, even more than the skill of Scalpelli, who attended her, at length triumphed over the violence of the distemper. She was gradually regaining her health, when Steinman received an order to proceed to Milan, where the government wished to consult him on some difficult and complicated business.

He had been fifteen days in the capital of Lombardy, when the following letter was put into his hands:—

From Madame de Steinman to her Husband.

Blevio, Saturday.

My fate is henceforth determined. Heaven has refused to listen to my wishes; I prayed earnestly to be taken thither, and it drives me down to my native earth, and binds me to it by a chain which I feel compelled to respect. I am a mother. You know whether I have fulfilled the duties of a daughter. I have never attempted to conceal from you what that fulfilment has cost me; I will observe with the same scrupulosity those that maternity imposes upon me. But my health is sorely shaken, and I feel I shall not have power to act as I wish, and as I ought, unless I can obtain that quiet and repose which you alone have it in your power to bestow on me. The involuntary shuddering

that never fails to seize on me when I look on you, might be fatal to me in my present delicate state. I ask you not to spare me such painful feelings for my own sake, but from a regard to the infant whose existence assures to you the ultimate possession of my property. When, therefore, you return to Como, if you deem it necessary to visit Blevio, at least do not call on me to appear in your presence; if you insist on my doing so, and any misfortune be the consequence, the responsibility be on your own head.

THOMASINE DE STEINMAN.

CHAPTER VIII.

At the end of our first volume we left La Cesia full of love and high in hope, soon to be most cruelly and miserably disappointed. Whilst traversing the Lake of Como, his inventive mind was busied to discover some means of getting a reversal of the proscription which prevented him from taking advantage of the kind dispositions of Thomasine. The difficulties he foresaw were not small, and the prospect of them far from encouraging; but

what affected him most painfully, was the necessity of offering himself as a petitioner to the arbiters of his fate. He felt himself degraded in anticipation, by a step so repugnant to the fiery pride of his character, and to the line of political conduct that he had hitherto pursued.

"Yes," said he to himself, "if chance had made me a native of a state ruled over by such a monarch as the Emperor Alexander, I could have addressed myself to him without repugnance, because I know his noble and elevated sentiments. He has generosity of soul, and would believe in the sincerity of my promises. How, indeed, could he refuse to judge with indulgence of what are termed political delinquencies; whose liberal ideas, were he not a sovereign, would rank him among their most illustrious partisans? But the unhappy fate that

pursues me has decreed that I should depend upon a government directed by courtiers who are the zealous abettors of absolute power. Blinded by their pusillanimous prejudices, proscription is their only weapon, nor is it possible to persuade them that clemency and justice are the best safeguards of thrones!—Well, since I must perforce adopt such a line of conduct, I shall employ corruption to gain over to my purpose the will of corrupted men. Whatever it cost me—whatever be the sum that their avarice may exact, I should prefer gorging it to degrading myself by unworthy solicitations."

In thus arguing, La Cesia followed the impulse of his own disinterested temper; but without recollecting that the same contempt of riches which made him so ready to sacrifice them to principle, had led him to neglect the means of securing the resources necessary for his

purpose. It was now no longer possible, when every acre of his property was subjected to a decree of sequestration, to attempt to borrow on a security so compromised. He might, indeed, address himself to such friends as had been more prudent than himself; but his delicacy recoiled at the idea of asking for a sum in loan, which he meant to employ in an endeavour to separate himself for ever from a cause which they had mutually sworn to support while they had life.

In the midst of these cogitations, it suddenly occurred to him that his uncle at Milan, who was recently deceased, might very probably have left him a legacy, as he had often declared it to be his intention. In that case he had no doubt that the Abbé Benutto, who possessed the confidence of the deceased, and who was sincerely devoted to the whole of the

family, would faithfully surrender to him what had been deposited in his hands, if he had succeeded in extricating it from the rapacious grasp of the Austrian agents. In this hope the count took the road to the capital of Lombardy; but on arriving there he found that the Abbé Benutto had removed, after rendering an account of the property of which he was executor, to the Chartreuse at Pavia: to Pavia, therefore, which is but a few hours' journey from Milan, La Cesia proceeded in search of him.

In the situation and destiny of this ancient monastery every thing is remarkable; and by a singular and extraordinary favour, both war and revolution have constantly respected it. It was to this edifice that Francis I. was conducted after the battle of Pavia, in which his courage lost him the victory. The ground

where this memorable conflict was fought has been completely turned up; and it is now impossible to perceive there, any more than elsewhere, a single trace of that of which the results were at the time so great. One monument remains of all that marked its history—the noble and dignified remark of the vanquished king.* Of all monuments, noble thoughts are the most permanent. For half a century the monks of Chartreuse have been driven out from their superb dwelling, which during three hundred years they had never ceased their toil in decorating; and which is in consequence one of the most beautiful as well as most singular in Italy. It is especially remarkable for its valuable mosaics: where the jasper, the onyx, the cornelian,

* "Tout est perdu hors l'honneur," was the expression of the gallant Francis, in his account of a battle that broke his power for ever.

the lapis-lazuli, shaded with admirable ingenuity, form pictures of the most precious finish and of imperishable splendour. This immense work was very nearly finished when Joseph II. mounted the throne. He suppressed the monastery, dismissed the workmen, and seized the funds destined for their payment. The arts, however, that had been fostered by the seminary, protected in their turn the edifice which they decorated: the reformer dared not to destroy so sacred a repertory, but appointed as its keepers three priests, whose special duty it was to look after the church; and one of these was the Abbé Benutto. La Cesia requested to be conducted to the ancient cell that he inhabited: the good old man did not at first recognise him, but as soon as he was announced, he embraced him with tears in his eyes.

"It is then my lot," said he, "to hold in my arms the offspring of that noble family to which I have consecrated my life! Count Jerome, I thought you lost for ever in the disasters of the revolution, and the poor marquis, your uncle, fully participated in my solicitude; and his deepest subject of regret on his death-bed was, that he was unable to insure to you a fortune independent of political persecution."

"I am aware," replied the count, "of my uncle's friendship; and I have more than once said to myself, that had I been but prudent enough to follow his counsel and yours, I should have been spared many useless vexations. But the past is no longer ours, and therefore let us attend to the future. Know then, my dear abbé, that I have for ever renounced all hazardous enterprises, and that my wish henceforth

is to live in peace, and to hand down to posterity that name which I received from my ancestors."

These last expressions charmed the honest ecclesiastic. "Is it really true," said he, a ray of joy beaming in his eyes, "that Providence has inspired into you as much wisdom and reason as you inherit courage and genius? The satisfaction that I enjoyed in seeing you again was, I confess to you frankly, somewhat clouded by a fear that the impetuosity of your character would lead you into new dangers."

"You may dismiss your fears," replied the count, "I now am anxious for nothing but to make my peace with the government; but as that peace must be purchased, I have come hither to inquire into the fortune of my deceased uncle, and to see if it will furnish me with the means."

" Come this way," said the abbé, leading the way into a small chamber which served as an oratory, " and you shall see at once all I have succeeded in saving."

La Cesia cast his eyes round the chamber, without noticing any object that merited attention, when Benutto showed him a small smoked picture over the reading-desk, and said to him with a smile—" Are you not struck then with the beauty of that picture?"

" You are sporting with me," replied Cesia, " that is a mere daub; there is neither design nor colouring in it."

" If you examine it more closely, you will perhaps like it better," said the abbé; and taking out a nail or two, and raising up the piece of linen that covered it, he displayed to the wondering count one of the finest works of Corregio painted on the pannel which served

as the frame. There was no possibility of mistaking the exquisite grace and the power of expression that characterise the rarest and finest specimens of that great master. La Cesia possessed in a high degree the quick and delicate taste which has the appearance of an innate faculty among most Italians. He gazed on the picture with admiration. "I need not tell you the history of this picture," said the abbé, "it is well known to amateurs, and made part of the splendid collection of Cardinal Litta, who bequeathed it on his death-bed to the marquis, your uncle, who was his friend; this was but a short time before the commencement of the first revolution of our unhappy country. As soon as I had an opportunity of witnessing the scientific rapacity of the French gentlemen, as well of those who acted on the government account as of those who were acting on their

own, I thought that the surest way of preserving the family property in this master-piece would be to withdraw it from every eye. I myself accordingly clothed the wooden pannel on which it was painted with that gross envelope; and that disgrace which has sheltered it for fifteen years from requisitions and confiscations has saved it in the last instance in which its safety was hazarded. When the Austrians, our new oppressors, sealed up the whole of the effects left by your uncle, I went forward and claimed as an object of devotion set apart for my peculiar use this picture, and nobody attempted to dispute my claim. My constant intention was to convey it to you; and had I not succeeded, as I now have, in doing so, I should have left it to this church as one of its most splendid ornaments."

"I am deeply affected, my dear abbé," replied

the count, "by your ingenuity of zeal, which has led you to adopt such a means of serving my interest; but how am I now to proceed, in order to dispose to the best advantage of the treasure which you have preserved for me?"

"That picture," said the priest, "is well worthy of figuring in the first collection in Europe; and there can be no doubt that in ordinary times it might have been most advantageously disposed of without its quitting Italy. But you are but too well aware that the greatest fortunes here have suffered serious diminutions; and I am not aware of any nation, save only the English, who have the means of purchasing, at a suitable price, so valuable a piece: for these islanders have, I know not how, contrived to double their wealth, even while subsidising the whole of Europe. Were I in your place, I would carry the picture to London."

" That would take me a great time."

" Then you can go to Rome by way of Florence. These two cities are at this moment the places of rendezvous of all the rich travellers of the English nation."

La Cesia thought the advice a good one, and he determined to follow it. He thanked most heartily the honest abbé for his care and his counsel, promised to see him without fail when he returned, and the very next day set out for Tuscany with his picture.

CHAPTER IX.

La Cesia, when he arrived at Florence, immediately had recourse to a picture-dealer, whose address Abbé Benutto had given to him; his name was Stampato: he was an excellent connoisseur, like almost all men of his profession; but he was at the same time an honest man, which very few of them are. Scarce had he looked at the Corregio, which the count proposed to sell, than he cried out with mingled admiration and regret—"Yes it has, I see it

has, the delicate and learned touch of the divine Allegri! and, alas! I see also another picture lost to dear Italy. It will be carried away to be buried, along with so many others, in that land which nature frowns and fortune smiles on: that England, where, to use the language of the sacred writ, 'they have eyes, but they do not see; ears, but they hear not; and an heart, but they do not understand.' Of old, this was not the case; then our prelates and our grandees were the enlightened protectors of the arts, and prided themselves in their superb galleries; but now, where are they? Most of them are ruined; and those who are not, fear to display by any outward token that their fortune has escaped the general shipwreck. No sale of the slightest importance can be effected without having recourse to the English. I must however add, count, that

the present moment is by no means favourable; those who passed the winter in Pisa and Florence have now left us for Switzerland: we have nobody here but Lord Spleeny, an old fellow immensely rich, but excessively capricious; however, as he is not destitute of taste, it is not impossible he may be prevailed on to bid for such an acquisition. I shall run this moment and inform him of its arrival; there is no time to be lost, for a person has been here this very moment to say that he is on the eve of quitting Italy."

Stampato went hastily away as he finished these words; and the count, taking advantage of the leisure that the absence of the picture-dealer afforded him, went to visit the celebrated gallery which is renowned over all other collections; and which, in fact, may be revisited an indefinite number of times, and

always with new pleasure. He rapidly traversed the long halls that lead to the octagon-room which goes by the name of the tribunal; that genuine sanctuary of the arts, to which none but master-pieces are admitted. It is there alone that the admirer of art may be gratified at once with all that is perfect in ancient sculpture, and all that is excellent in the modern school of painting. There the age of Leo X. is brought in contact with that of Pericles; and in this unique combination the former would have borne off the victory had not the Medicean Venus, whose exquisite beauty and harmony defies all rivalry as it does all comparison, stepped in to maintain the superiority of the latter. The universal admiration which that matchless statue attracts depends unquestionably on the more than human beauty of its outline. Its perfection

nature has never risen to; it was genius alone that could conceive and create those wonders to which taste, whether learned or uninstructed, has in all ages so eagerly paid homage. For a long time did La Cesia remain wrapt in ecstasy before this finished exemplar of beauty and of grace; but the group of Niobe and her family was passed by with a slight notice. The strong expression of maternal grief caused in him a painful emotion, which even the exquisite skill of the sculptor could not efface, similar to what he had before experienced at Rome on beholding the Laocoon. He was about to leave the gallery when one of the keepers, who had formerly known him, proposed to conduct him to the Palace Pitti, by means of that long corridor which in its course traverses nearly half the city, and passes above several houses, as well as one of the bridges of

the Arno. This passage, which has the appearance of a lofty aqueduct, served the family of Medicis as a safe and assured means of communication during times of trouble, between their own residence and the palace of the government.* It was not without deep interest that the duke revisited this superb edifice, pre-

* A recent event, after a lapse of three centuries from its erection, justified the political providence of the clear-sighted Florentines. When, in the midst of profound peace, Napoleon sent a detachment to seize the person of the grand-duke for the purpose of his being ransomed, as were the other princes of Italy, it was by means of this very passage that he succeeded in rescuing himself from the rapacious grasp of the conqueror. The Palace Pitti was beleaguered; but while the ministers of the grand-duke kept amusing the French commander by a pretended negotiation, their sovereign had reached the old palace by means of the corridor; and there mounting a fleet horse, he rapidly rode away, nor was he ever afterwards laid hold of.

senting as it does so fine a model of Tuscan architecture; and whose plain and almost rough exterior presents a very marked and singular contrast to the splendour of the interior, and to the magnificent collection of paintings, which combines the master-pieces of all the celebrated schools of modern art. It is here, to select but one example out of a thousand, that the traveller may behold the delightful Madonna della Sedia, whose beauties have been reproduced so frequently by the pencil, the crayon, and the burin; and which is as commonly known and appreciated in every quarter of Europe as are the poems of Ariosto or Tasso. Here, too, in the private cabinet of the grand-duke, may now be seen the famous Venus of Canova, which La Cesia inspected with all the attention that the most celebrated work of that great master so well

deserved. "This is no goddess," he at length exclaimed, "but it is one of the loveliest of women. And yet," added he, with the republican pride which was characteristic of his despotism, "fair nature has not degenerated—then whence the difference? is it not that in the arid soil of slavery genius must ever languish? If the Cleomenes and the Phidias, those thrice illustrious citizens of enfranchised Greece, had been born subjects of Italian kings, they would never have felt or given expression to loftier sentiments than this."

The count left the Palace Pitti at a still early hour; and the church of Santa Croce, in front of which he was obliged to pass in his way homeward, standing invitingly open, he was tempted to enter once more that superb tomb, in which are congregated, if we believe the

Baronne de Staël, a more illustrious assemblage of dead than any other cemetery of Europe can boast. The entrance into this chamber of death is, as it were, guarded from profane intrusion by two of these great departed—we mean Galileo and Michael Angelo; a little farther in advance rises the monument of one who is, after a lapse of centuries, still the first of Italian prose-writers—the witty and licentious Boccacio; facing the entrance is the tomb of the celebrated politician Machiavelli, where by a singular contrast a name, which in every other nation conveys the strongest reproach that good faith can heap on a statesman, is commemorated by his fellow-citizens with the splendid homage of a most pompous and flattering epitaph.*

* "Machiavelli—

"Nullum tanto nomini par eulogium."

But amongst all the tombs in the church of the Holy Cross, that which rivetted the attention of La Cesia most was the tomb of Alfieri. He had known in his early youth the splendid and irregular genius whose silent remains that block of marble now covered! Canova has depictured Italy as weeping over the buried bard; and nothing can possibly be finer than the form of the figure, which is of a colossal magnitude, and whose expression of sorrow is sublimely pourtrayed.

The count gazed on the work of the sculptor, while he exclaimed—"The great artist has for once assumed the chisel without the inspiration that ordinarily guided its labours. Doubtless the friends of Alfieri bitterly wept his fall; they sorrowed while they thought on the value of their loss; but to his country he has not perished: not a day passes but, from the one

extremity of the peninsula to the other, some soul is elevated, some heart is touched, by his immortal tragedies; and every class of the nation feels their ennobling influences in the generous sentiments they inspire. Incomparable bard! simple in thy fables as energetic in thy language, thou disdainedst those petty artifices which seek to facilitate, by the aid of dramatic illusion, that success which thou commandest by the irresistible charms of thy simple majesty."

If in the eulogium that La Cesia pronounced on the great tragic poet of modern Italy there was some mixture of exaggeration, it may be easily explained by the conformity of their position in society, and still more by their similarity of character. Like Alfieri, the count descended from one of the first families in Piedmont, and like him, the dignity of such a

birth was indulged till it bordered on pride. Their political opinions were the same; and, what is also singular, those ardent friends of liberty entertained no less hatred of equality than of despotism, and despised the mob as much as they detested their tyrants. It was not without pleasure that La Cesia used to repeat the saying of Alfieri to those who reproached him for the violence of his aversion of the French revolution after having not only approved that great event, but even celebrated it in his verses. "I knew only its great points then," said he; "I did not know its petty ones."

The epitaph that is cut on the tomb of Alfieri contains only these five words—

"To Victor Alfieri Aloysia Stolberg."

La Cesia now looked on this simple epitaph

for the first time, and he was deeply affected by it.—" And so," said he, " Aloysia countess of Albany, the wife of the last of the Stuarts, who enjoyed at Rome all the honours of kingly dignity, preferred being known as the mistress of an immortal poet to regal greatness, and was not the less esteemed on account of her deliberate choice! And why may not I too endeavour to procure for the object of my affections a brilliant and honourable place in the memories of men? I too," he continued, reverting to the splendid success that signalised his early homage of the lyric muse—" I too am a poet: so Byron declared, and Italy approved his judgment. If I have ceased to employ my pen, it is not that the sacred fire is extinguished in my bosom; love can double the energies of genius! and it is yet time enough. Alfieri had more years than I have when he entered on

that career which he rendered so splendid. Are all dramatic combinations exhausted? No. Doubtless in the wide regions of possibility, in those regions to which common-minded authors possess no access, there yet lie slumbering a whole host of beings, grand in character, powerful in passion, which wait but the call of a creative imagination to wake them to life and form.—I will invoke them: I will bring them forth on the stage of Italy. My country, which, oppressed as she is, no misfortune can vilify, will applaud the efforts of my generous muse; and the heart of my well-beloved will beat high when she hears of my triumph. I have given up the agitations of politics, the hazards of its dangerous game, the most fair seeming of which so often deceives the lovers of freedom. But no such terrible results await those who are content to addict themselves to

the drama; or who labour merely to inspire into men a love of virtue and an abhorrence of vice and of tyranny. That is after all the noblest employ of exalted talent; and that, henceforth, shall be the sole object I shall strive to attain."

The count, giving free course to the warmth of his imagination, pronounced these last words aloud, with a vehemence that partook of enthusiasm. He thought he was alone; the church, at the time, had the appearance of being deserted, and he had seen no one within its walls but two or three veiled females at a distance, near the bottom of the vast nave, who seemed as little endowed with life or motion as the statues of the saints before which they were prostrated. There were, however, two personages in one of the side aisles, at no great distance from him, who could sufficiently hear

his words, though he could not perceive them. These were Stampato and Lord Spleeny. The proposal of purchasing the Corregio had gratified the English nobleman, whose collection did not happen to contain any picture by that celebrated master. Eager to conclude the bargain, because he intended to set off from Florence next day, he proceeded to the hotel where the count had alighted, and not finding him there, he had wandered into the church of Santa Croce, which was close by. While engaged in copying a curious inscription from one of the ancient tombs, Stampato happened to see La Cesia, who was leaning on one of the pillars that support the lofty arch in front of the tomb of Alfieri, and pointed him out to his noble companion. The upturned eye of the young poet gazing towards heaven sparkled with the inspiration he felt, and his mellow and sonorous

voice appeared as if formed to move all hearts. Lord Spleeny was greatly struck with the nobleness of his stature and the beauty of his features; and he was especially delighted to hear him express sentiments so perfectly in accordance with his own; and hardly had La Cesia ceased to speak, when he advanced up to him, and holding out his hand—"Count," said he, "I bless the chance that has favoured me with an introduction to such a man as you seem to be: whatever be the value of your picture, you possess, in a generous soul and elevated sentiments, a treasure which I prize infinitely higher."

La Cesia replied to this unexpected compliment politely, but reservedly; and as Lord Spleeny appeared pressed for time, he instantly conducted him to his lodgings. The long stay of the English nobleman in the classic land of the

fine arts had developed in him the taste which he inherited from nature; and the admiration that he felt in beholding the picture he vainly attempted to conceal.

"Your lordship will not fail to remark," said Stampato, "that you may effect this purchase in perfect safety; the genuineness of this master-piece is proved by evidence the most indisputable, both by the signature and by the particular marks of originality; it is, moreover, well known to the amateurs: in fact, there is not a family in the kingdom whose genealogy is more capable of being clearly traced."

"That," replied his lordship, "is precisely the thing that I care nothing about. When I set myself to judge of a picture, I betake me to the evidence of my eyes and not to documents, which, saving your presence, gentlemen, are as easily fabricated as those titles of honour which

you mention, and for which I care still less than I do for certificates of originality. Bring me a copy better painted and more beautiful than the original, and I'll give you a higher price for it."

This heretical offer made the merchant shudder, and the count smile.

"All I wish now to know," his lordship went on, "is the price of this Corregio; I don't wish to pay more than the fair value for any thing I purchase, but at the same time I won't take advantage of the wants of the vender to obtain it for less."

"That is a noble method of managing business," replied La Cesia; "and to respond to it, as I feel I ought, I beg to declare my perfect readiness to abide by the valuation that may be fixed by Stampato, or by any other person

skilled in those matters whom your lordship may see fit to select."

"Stampato be it then," said Lord Spleeny, "provided he pronounce the value at once."

"Really, my lord," said Stampato, "your lordship's declaration embarrasses me not a little. Before the revolution, we had in Italy a regular price for such specimens of art; but now, sales are so rare and prices so various, it is impossible to know beforehand what we may reckon on. The picture market has, in fact, been transferred to England, the rendezvous of all the capitals of the world. If, however, you insist on having my opinion, I don't think that I am deceived in saying that this small picture, on account of its exquisite state of preservation, would not fetch less at a sale in Pall Mall than fifteen hundred pounds sterling; and I

have no doubt that in paying that sum, your lordship is only laying out money which, whenever you feel inclined, you may draw in again."

"That is a process of which I seldom think," replied the Englishman; "my only object in these purchases is to indulge my whim, and to escape for a few minutes from the listlessness of existence. Last year, for instance, while I was at Venice, I purchased a palace on the Brenta, and I caused the whole of my marbles and antiques from my residence in Lancashire to be transported to it; but I have not, and probably never shall visit it, for the humidity of the climate is bad for my asthma. The bustle however of giving orders and directions for the removal occupied me very agreeably for several weeks. And besides, the continually increasing wealth of Great Britain is gradually augmenting the

value of my property there without the slightest exertion on my part, and I am thus saved the necessity of studying great economy in my expenditure. But at the same time I make it a rule," continued his lordship, " never to give way to the exorbitant demands of cupidity or dishonesty; and Stampato can well remember the process which I carried on but last winter against a coach-proprietor, on account of fifteen pauls that he demanded above what had been agreed on. The pleadings cost me, I confess, more than a couple of hundred of those same pauls, and I had to remain five days freezing with cold in a miserable inn; but I would have remained there six months, sooner than have allowed myself to be cheated by that rascal. Resistance, energetical and persevering resistance to oppression wherever he meets it, that is the distinguishing feature of an Englishman!"

"Your lordship ought to add," observed La Cesia courteously, "that England is the only country where the love of justice supplies those who happen to be injured by fraud or violence with the gratuitous and disinterested support of their fellow-citizens, a support which they nowhere else can look for, except in the magistrates appointed and paid for the maintenance of the laws. In France, for instance, every one is shocked at an act of injustice, and every tongue is loud in censuring it; but let the injured party aim at procuring redress for the injury he has sustained, let those sympathising friends be called on to put forth their hands, to devote their time, above all, to employ their purses in his cause, their levity and selfishness paralyse all their efforts, and the sufferer remains unsuccoured. And indeed,

every where, except in England, the same rule obtains."

The patriotic pride of Lord Spleeny was more flattered by this compliment than he was altogether willing to show. On the contrary, giving free course to his caustic humour in doing the honours of his country, of which he was yet well content to listen to the praises: "That good-nature," said he, "of which we are so proud, joined to all our energy of purpose, does not prevent us from possessing a claim to rank among the greatest fools of Christendom. Every one knows that our criminal code is barbarous, and that our lawyers are greater plunderers than the thieves whom they hang. And what say you, count, to our wives, sold in the market like so many horses with halters round their necks; to our infamous Gretna-Green marriages; to our boxing matches; to our

system of impressment; our rotten boroughs; and finally, to that hereditary race of ministerial corrupters and corrupted chambers? So much for national manners and national institutions. As to individuals, it is admitted, that there are more lunatics in our little island than in all the world beside; and if to these be added all the persons who by courtesy are denominated eccentric, and who in any other quarter would be placed in confinement, or at least put under guardianship, you will easily perceive how small is the wisdom of glorious Albion."

After this diatribe, which assuredly Lord Spleeny would not have suffered from the lips of a stranger, he hastily discussed the affair of the picture. The price being fixed, the only thing that remained was to arrange the mode of payment; for this purpose he gave Count La Cesia a draft on his banker for fifteen hundred

pounds ; and as the manners as well as the sentiments of the young Piedmontese nobleman had singularly pleased him, he added, taking him in a kindly manner by the hand, which he shook with a heartiness and vigour that would have made a man less firm than the count cry out under the pain of the pressure—" If you imagine at any time I can do you a service, apply to me frankly. As you seem to know something of the English, you can judge whether their offers of service are sincere or not, although they dislike making a display of them."

CHAPTER X.

La Cesia having thus happily finished the business that had conducted him to Florence, made haste to return to Lombardy. He changed the check that he had received from Lord Spleeny with the banker for a letter of credit in Milan, and taking his seat in the vehicle of the mail courier, by the evening of the following day he had arrived once more in the capital. His great object now was to dispose in his favour the agents of government, who were soon

to pronounce on his application. Public opinion, which in such matters frequently calumniates and exaggerates, had represented them as accessible to corruption, and the thing was extremely probable; still, as it admitted of some doubt, it was necessary that he should manage with extreme circumspection, for fear of compromising himself. Chance for once stood his friend. He happened to know one of the partners of the house of N., on which he held the letter of credit, to be a zealous though cautious partisan of liberal ideas, and he had often met him at Vienna. He did not hesitate to confide to him the desire he felt to enter into possession of his property, and the obstacles which he had reason to apprehend, and he ended by requesting his advice and assistance. The banker replied, that his business required of him the utmost prudence, and that he could

not directly mix himself up with such an affair, but he pointed out to him an intelligent man, to whom he might without scruple confide the management of it.

This was a Frenchman, whom the turmoil of the revolution had driven to Lombardy some twenty years before, and who was exceedingly expert in settling contested matters such as La Cesia's. He was from that province in the north-west of France whose natives are proverbial for concealing a great deal of cunning under a simple and clownish exterior. Their understanding also is commonly correct, and their prudence great, although perhaps their honesty of purpose sometimes supplies the place of rectitude of action. They are indeed reproached with being but little troubled with scruples in their choice of means, and of frequently employing for the objects of

chicanery that knowledge of law to which none of them is a stranger. Valville, in a word (that was the Frenchman's name), was a Norman.

La Cesia without scruple confided his affairs to his management. "Your case," said he, after listening attentively to the history that La Cesia had given him of its bearings, "is doubtless rather a difficult one; but, so far as I can see into it, it is by no means desperate. The Austrian government, which was terribly alarmed during the Piedmontese rebellion, has now completely recovered its confidence; yet in its invariable, or rather immovable policy, it continues to persist in its system of severity: and though the prisoners of state who are detained in the fortresses of Moravia, and in the old convent of San Giorgio at Venice, no longer run any risk of their lives, it is not the

less certain that they will continue to suffer in their personal liberty and in their property. It would be quite useless for you to invoke the clemency of the sovereign; but there is yet a means that I consider to be an efficient one, and that is to appeal to his justice. The grand object is to prove that your name ought not to have been placed on the proscribed list at all; and any thing may be proved in this country by the employment of a little money, and a little skill. Take example by what was practised in France after the reign of terror. The emigrants who returned at that time from foreign countries all found means without the slightest difficulty, of furnishing legal proof to the republican authorities that they had never quitted the French territory. I have no doubt that you can with equal facility obtain authentic certificates and attestations in regular form,

by means of which we shall prove beyond all dispute that you have never ceased to reside in Lombardy. We may say, for instance, that you were all the time of the troubles lying sick at some remote village; and if your name has appeared on the muster-roll of the insurgents, it must of course have been some distant relation who was confounded with you, or else some adventurer who had assumed your name and titles. The documents thus procured will be sent to be examined at the proper offices; and if they attempt to raise any difficulties, we know the way to bring them to reason. Their report will not fail to be favourable, provided it be well paid for; and the viceroy on receiving it, assisted by a council composed of men every way as honourable as himself, cannot refuse to reinstate you in your rights."

This plan, which appeared to be more feasible

than any other he could devise, the count adopted; and Valville, who was perfectly skilled in this sort of intrigues, assisted him in getting up a sort of tale, in which they kept close to the more recent events of his life, and filled up with as much appearance of probability as possible those parts which it was important to keep in the back-ground. The following, after mature reflection, was the story on which they decided:—La Cesia, it will be recollected, had remained at Turin, when the Countess Gradiska in the spring of the year left it for France: they determined to declare, on the contrary, that he had accompanied her on her journey; that when they reached Savoy he had fallen sick of a dangerous malady; that the countess, who was under the necessity of proceeding to Paris, had left him in a village on their route with his groom, and one of her

women to look after him, but that his illness getting daily more serious, and at length his death being momentarily looked for, these faithless domestics had plundered their master, and fled across the Alps; that they had, however, profited but little by their robbery, for the groom on arriving at Turin had lost all the money, had abandoned his female companion, and enrolled himself under his master's name (as he possessed all his papers) in a regiment of cavalry belonging to the insurgents, that was at that moment being raised. From the period of the battle of Novara, the tale went on, in which he had been severely wounded, no one knew what had become of him. That circumstance did not, however, prevent the Piedmontese government from placing on the proscribed list the name of Count Jerome de la Cesia, which was

found enrolled in the muster-list of the regiment.

The fable was well got up, and in a very short time the proofs by which it was attempted to substantiate it gave it every appearance of truth. Valville happened to have relatives in Savoy; he sent thither an intelligent emissary, who for a very trifling sum procured from an innkeeper of a tavern at Aiguebelle all the attestations that he wanted; and he procured in addition, with very little difficulty, the certificate of a country surgeon, which distinctly bore that he had attended the count during the progress of a severe malady, the symptoms of which he detailed as well as their regular progress. Nothing, in fact, was wanting even to the apothecary's bill, who was declared to have furnished the medicines for the patient, and who now came forward to claim payment of them.

The whole of these documents were of course duly legalised, stamped, and countersigned, by the competent authorities, and in every point of view incapable of being impeached. And in order to dissipate even a shadow of doubt, should any remain in the minds of the judges, Valville bethought him of producing an irrefragable witness in the *femme de chambre* of the countess, whom, by a most happy chance, he had succeeded in finding out. The person that he employed for the purpose of acting this rather delicate part was a young woman of a somewhat equivocal character, but bold and ready-witted, and one whom he had known intimately while he lived in Brescia. Thither Valville went to find her, and made sure of her honesty by a bribe of twenty-five napoleons.

When the whole of this piece of machinery

was fairly set a going, the petition, accompanied by the original documents transmitted from Savoy, were delivered by Valville to the proper office in the police department; and all that remained to be done was to insinuate to the clerk who was to take charge of them that although the cause was in every respect a just one, nevertheless a very handsome present would not the less accompany a prompt and favourable decision.

Valville hoped that this promise, which, without being formally accepted, was not rejected, would abridge the excessive tardiness of the Austrian officiaries; but the writings in all such cases are so numerous, and the progress of business so slow, that at the end of a month the application seemed but little more advanced than it was the first day. It was then that Valville, in order to have a plausible motive

for pressing a determination, resolved to produce the alleged *femme de chambre* of the Countess Gradiska. He brought the female accordingly before the commissary of police, and there declared with much vehemence his intention to prosecute her as an accomplice in the robbery of Count la Cesia, unless she declared before the officers of justice all that she knew of that matter. The girl trembled and wept; and at length, after a delay and resistance to this appeal that seemed inspired by a feeling of shame, she gave a detail of all the particulars of the journey to Savoy in the same terms in which they had been dictated to her. The magistrate, who was far from having any reason to suspect her veracity, limited his interrogatory to the questions ordinarily addressed to a witness; and she was about to retire when, on a whisper from one of his assistants, he

called her back in order to examine her papers; and as all of them were strictly conformable to her declaration, and also in perfectly regular form, they were restored to her, and she was merely requested to leave, in case she should be wanted, a note of her residence.

Next day Valville procured from the register a copy of this examination; and, fortified by that document, he proceeded to the office of police, and pressed with the most earnest and urgent entreaty for a decision, which he observed could no longer be a subject of the slightest difficulty, insomuch as the *alibi* of the petitioner had been proved in the most clear and demonstrative manner, not only by authentic documents, but by the production of an important witness. These arguments were not unplausible; but we have generally observed that French vivacity, instead of stirring up,

rather serves to render the phlegm of an Austrian more settled than ordinary.

Valville was told that the last document then handed in would certainly be docketed along with the rest; that the affair of his client had its regular number on the file, and would be adjudged in its turn; and when he requested the officer to be so good as fix some time when he might expect that event, the latter drily replied, and not without an air of irony, that if the period did not occur during the course of that year, it probably would occur before the end of the next.

Valville retired in despair to report this answer to La Cesia, who at length wearied out of all patience, and as much irritated as vexed, determined to hazard the risk of a personal application to the head of the police department, whose honesty, according to all reports,

was much more than doubtful. He did not, however, go so far in the rashness of his impatience as to demand an audience in his own name; he presented himself as M. de Noirval, a French merchant, thus giving to himself the description that appeared in the passport of which he was the bearer. It was only after a lapse of three days that he was admitted to the presence of the great man, who, before giving our readers any account of the interview, it may not be necessary to state was that very Steinman who has figured rather too often in the course of this history, and who at that moment held the office of head director of police at Milan. The countenance of the count was noble and even imposing, which, joined to his elegance of manners, did not fail to procure him a suitable reception. The coarse features

and arrogant air of Steinman did not less affect the count, though with other feelings; he therefore hastily entered on the subject of his visit, by telling him that there was an affair, the documents connected with which had been a long time deposited in the office under his direction, and that he had come to converse with him on the subject; it was one, he added, on which M. Steinman would soon have to pronounce judgment. Scarcely, however, had he mentioned the name of the case La Cesia, when the director-general interrupted him by a loud horse-laugh—

"Oh, oh!" said he, "it is Count de la Cesia's case you come about, is it? a Piedmontese noble that same La Cesia, eh? a man of some parts, but as real a rebel as the devil himself. He finished the game by getting

himself wounded at Novara, did he not? like a fool as he was. You see I am up to the whole matter."

The count coloured with anger, but contrived to restrain himself, and Steinman continued—

"Well, sir, you must know that a very plausible petition, and one that was in fact calculated to excite the sensibility of his imperial highness the viceroy in no small degree, has been presented in the name of this count: but there is one fact you can hardly know; and that is, that the trickery of this petition has just been discovered. The intriguers, who acted as agents for this La Cesia—what do you think? they had actually the hardihood to bring forward a pretended *femme de chambre* to give a little additional weight to what is, I have no doubt, a tissue of pure falsehood.

Happily the vigilance of one of the officers of his majesty discovered the *ruse*. Whilst the commissary of police was taking down the evidence of this would-be *femme de chambre*, one of my fellows, and the cunningest rascal among them, who happened by accident to be present—the rogue has the eye of an hawk—surprised the girl and the pretty gentleman who produced her interchanging glances of intelligence, and the latter threatening her, as he thought. No more was required for our folks; and they speedily discovered that this lady, who according to her tale had but lately arrived from Savoy, had in reality reached Milan by the Brescia diligence. There," added he, with an air of mockery, "is news respecting the affair of Count la Cesia, in which you appear to take so deep an interest. I am most happy to communicate it. He an-

nounced in his petition that he intended to come hither in order to urge his suit in person; and I shall not disguise from you that orders have been despatched to the frontiers to detain him as soon as he makes his appearance. And now, sir, I have the honour to wish you a very good morning."

He accompanied his finishing sentence with a disdainful bow; and at the same time, by a waive of his hand, pointed to the door. It is easy to conceive what vexation and irritation the unhappy count experienced on beholding the whole of the prospects, on which he had been building up the happiness of his life, thus destroyed at a single blow. Any other man would have given himself up to despair; but La Cesia was possessed of great strength of character, and his wit was fertile in resources. Far from retiring, he advanced towards Stein-

man; and addressing him with admirable coolness—"One word, Mr. Director," said he, "before we part. I am neither the relation nor the friend of the person in whose behalf I came to solicit you; but I have a pretty strong interest in the arrangement of his affairs. My object is to disengage a considerable portion of my property, which I find in danger of being compromised, in consequence of my connexion with him; and for that have I come from Lyons to Milan, determined to make any sacrifice that may be necessary to insure success. The case is this:—I happened to be at Vienna in the spring of 1820; and Messrs. F., the court bankers, with whom our house had done business for more than twenty years, knowing that I had some unemployed capital, proposed that I should subscribe thirty thousand florins to a loan that they were then negoti-

ating for the Count de la Cesia, on the security of his marquisate of Lunato in the Bergamasco. I agreed to this mortgage, which appeared to me rather advantageous; and even before the formalities were legally executed, as I well knew the reputation of the count as a man of honour, I advanced the money to his order without scruple, in payment of his bills: I have them here in this pocket-book. A few days afterwards I was obliged to set out for Holland; and then I was obliged to go to England. I left to my friends the care of my affairs; but unhappily their own were embarrassed, and consequently they did not attend to mine; and the deed which would have secured my property was in consequence never executed. I was not aware of this fact until very lately, when I returned to France; and the same letter that made me acquainted with it told me that my

debtor was fled, and the whole of his property sequestrated. Now if it be definitively confiscated, then my debt, being a merely personal one, must necessarily be lost. If, on the contrary, the count be acquitted, I shall have my bills immediately registered, and get a mortgage on the property, and thus secure payment."

"Your condition," replied Steinman, "is a very nice one. It is a pity to see an honest merchant like you the dupe of an excess of confidence; but I see no help for it: and even you yourself, sir, after the details you have given me, must be aware that it is a matter that does not, of possibility, admit of any arrangement."

"That arrangement is impossible," interrupted La Cesia, in a lively tone; "I can by no means admit. There are obstacles and diffi-

culties doubtless; but they are not insuperable. Nay, I shall go farther: I shall show you that it depends on you alone, and that without the slightest breach of your duty, to bring the matter to a termination that will satisfy all parties concerned. Listen to me, the subject is worthy of your attention."

So saying he sat down on the form in front of the desk behind which Steinman stood, and made a sign for Steinman to sit also. The latter, as if struck and subdued by the influence of that natural superiority which enables its possessor to exercise over others a power altogether independent of their will, sat down, and listened while the count went on.

"First of all," said he, "I shall entreat you to observe that the deposition of the *femme de chambre* has at bottom nothing to do with the

business. In fact, grant that she was not with La Cesia in Savoy as she deposed, does it by any means follow that the latter served in the ranks of the insurgents? Most assuredly not; and you must admit that there is not a tribunal in Europe that would condemn him on any such presumption, while so many authentic and undisputed documents attest the truth of his allegations. At the same time, I confess, one false testimony furnishes legitimate ground for suspicion as well as unfavourable presumptions against the party —."

Steinman here interrupted him—

"When a man has right on his side, Mr. Noirval, he has not recourse to criminal expedients. It is evident to me that all the documents are falsified from the first to the ——."

"Stop there!" cried La Cesia, interrupting

him in his turn, "your love of justice makes you go too far. I see," continued he, lowering his voice and assuming a confidential air, "that I must talk to you frankly. Well, then, Mr. Director, your judgment was just, the girl was from Brescia; she never was in Savoy in her life: in fact it was I—I, sir, that suggested the little trick, against which, notwithstanding, my honesty revolted; but I am hard pressed, and the interminable delays of your officers impelled me to practise it. But, notwithstanding that, you may safely rely on the attestations furnished by the count; they are perfectly authentic, and under all circumstances you will find them sufficient; you have only to write to Savoy in order to get as many more as you require in support of them. For myself, what I principally desire is to get possession as soon as possible of my property; and as I know ex-

perimentally what is required in all countries in order to stimulate the activity of officers, I have taken my measures accordingly. Here are five hundred napoleons, the half of the sum that I destine for that purpose. I shall pay down the rest on receiving the definitive judgment: to this I pledge my word; and in every quarter of Europe it is well known that the word of a Noirval, as well as his signature, is as good as ready money."

In pronouncing these words, he emptied on the table a small leathern bag that held ten rouleaux, each containing fifty napoleons.

Steinman was evidently embarrassed. The considerable sum that glittered before him strongly tempted his cupidity; but withheld by the dread of compromising himself much more than by any conscientious scruples, he replied to the count—"You are ignorant of the cha-

racter, sir, of the department over which I have the honour to preside. Interest has nothing to do with its decisions. If the claim that you prefer is a just one, and supported as you assure me it is by authentic documents, I shall be the first to give you all the advantage of them; you may rely on that. In the meanwhile take back your money; the fees of office are extremely moderate, and in no case will they amount to even the twentieth part of the sum you have laid down."

"I shall not take back one farthing," replied La Cesia decidedly, for he perceived that the moment was a critical one. "I am well aware that you are overwhelmed with business; and when we ask for extraordinary labour, it is but reasonable that we should pay the value of it, and that he who has the trouble should receive the reward. I shall return in eight

days hence, and I shall then bring the remainder."

"Well," said the director of the police, "if you will insist on leaving this money here, we must look on it in the light of a deposit merely, which will be faithfully restored to you in case that the question is not decided in your favour."

"I shall not contemplate any such a result," hastily replied the count; "the success or failure depends entirely on yourself."

"I admit my report will weigh a good deal."

"I cannot doubt that all I receive I shall owe to you alone; and is it not quite natural in that case that you should accept of a small mark of my gratitude, which can do no possible injury to the government you so zealously serve, and which bestows on you for all your services so paltry a salary?"

"That is quite true," said Steinman, charmed

at being furnished with the excuse: "my salary is small enough, Heaven knows; and yet had I been a bachelor still it might have sufficed me, but as I am now a married man, with the prospect also of soon being a father, why I must reckon on some pretty heavy expenses. Not," he proceeded, drawing himself up, "that I have allied myself either to a mean or poor family, my wife has both titles and an estate; I believe in all the district of Como there is not a family that can vie in either with that of the Marquis Varèze."

Had a thunderbolt burst that moment at the feet of La Cesia and struck him dead to the ground, the change in his appearance would not have been more sudden and more frightful.

"Thus then," said he at last, in an interrupted and mournful voice, "thus then have I been betrayed!"

His eyes were haggard, his hair stood on end, his whole frame was shaken with convulsive throes: on a sudden, in a paroxysm of rage, he darted towards Steinman; and had he once grasped him in his nervous arms, he would have strangled him on the spot; but intrenched behind his desk he avoided La Cesia's grasp. This fit of fury continued but a moment; and when it passed the count instantly retired, casting a look of horror and disdain on the trembling and petrified director; and exclaiming as he moved to the door, "Tremble not thus, thou coward! I will not take thy life; my wrongs require a vengeance slower and more cruel in its operation."

Steinman remained alone in his apartment for a sufficient length of time to recover from the confusion into which so violent and so unexpected an attack had thrown him. Find-

ing every attempt to explain the motives of it impossible, he would have been almost tempted to believe that the whole scene had been an illusion that had abused his senses, had not the rouleaux of gold, which still remained on the table, proved that there was at least in some part of it a substantial reality.

CHAPTER XI.

VALVILLE, who felt uneasy at the very hazardous step which La Cesia had determined on taking with Steinman, had set out to meet him. He found him within a few yards of the office of the government walking with long and hurried steps, his eyes wildly wandering, and muttering to himself, as he hastened on, some unintelligible words. He eagerly accosted him, and requested to know how matters stood.

"I might have killed him," replied La

Cesia, with apparent calmness; "that was my first movement; but death is too little for him —death is too little for him." This expression he frequently repeated.

Valville, who was as much alarmed by his appearance as by his words, endeavoured in vain to calm his perturbed spirit, and at length, with no small difficulty, succeeded in getting him home to his lodgings. When there, he was speedily convinced of the unfortunate state to which the unhappy young man was reduced; his face was inflamed, his eyes were bloodshot; in a word, a burning fever, conversation without connexion, convulsive or irregular gestures, all announced that a delirium bordering on phrensy was beginning to seize his frame. The doctor who was called confirmed all the fears which such a train of symptoms indicated. Valville, in whom his connexion with the count

had inspired as much affection for his character as admiration of his talents, was sensibly affected by his lamentable condition, and determined to omit nothing that could recover him from it; and imagining that the presence of a person whom he knew to be devoted to him could not fail to be agreeable, and perhaps salutary, he set out for Pavia, and brought back thence the good Abbé Benutto, who came indeed with alacrity to soften the griefs of the last scion of a house which he almost looked on as his own.

During the journey, however, of the two friends, though of but a few hours, the disease had increased to a most alarming degree. It was not mere delirium, it was absolute insanity. The count uttered frightful cries, foamed at the mouth with rage, and tore in pieces whatever came within his reach. No one dared to approach him; but yet when he gazed on

Benutto his looks became milder in their expression, and intimated some recollection of friendship; but this glimmering of sense passed away as a glimpse of lightning. It was now necessary to adopt some efficacious means of preventing those who were called on to minister to him from suffering by his violence, or from the consequences that might ensue from its indulgence to his own person; but it was evident that no nurse of ordinary strength could restrain him under the influence of a malady which is well known to double or treble the ordinary powers of the body; and La Cesia when in health was of a most athletic frame. The Abbé Benutto, not willing to abandon him to the harshness of a public asylum, thought that the best way would be to place in charge of him some sure and faithful servant, who united great physical powers to indefatigable

assiduity. The person he selected was a German chasseur, whom the count's uncle, who had served in the Austrian army, had brought with him from Vienna. He had left him by his will a small annuity, which the abbé was charged to pay him by quarterly instalments. This man Benutto immediately set about to seek, and proposed to him to act as attendant on the nephew of his old master.

"The nephew of my master—of the marquis?" said the brave Karl, "I would go through fire for him."

The abbé thanked him as affectionately as if he had rendered him a personal service, and then conducted him to the house of Valville. They found the patient in a state of quietude, or rather of stupor, which had been induced by the extreme lassitude that had followed the hot fit of the fever. As he had now the use

of his senses, it was thought a good moment to introduce to him the faithful servant to whose superintendence he was about to be committed. Benutto, in presenting him to him, said that he had never quitted his uncle during the whole of his campaigns, and that he had even been wounded on one occasion in an attempt to defend him.

" I have no need of any one to look after me," replied La Cesia in a feeble voice, but with a tone of decision.

" My lord," replied Karl, assuming a military attitude, " I have been commanded to mount guard over you, that is my duty, and here I remain."

" What! in spite of me?" replied the count in a rage, for his impetuous character was not to be broken down either by misfortune or

suffering. "Leave the room this instant, or else——," and he raised his hand to strike him.

The chasseur, at the risk of receiving the blow, made a step forward, put one knee to the ground, and taking in his hands the lower part of the count's garment, he said with much feeling—"My duty is to serve the nephew of my master, and I cannot desert it."

There was something irresistible in this simple act, and in the words that accompanied it. La Cesia raised him up.

"So you are absolutely bent," said he, "on remaining with a miserable man? Well, then, if I live, I will supply the place of the master you have lost."

From that moment Karl found himself installed in the establishment of the count, and

placed so high in his affections, that even in his most furious fits he never got into a passion with Karl.

In the mean time Valville busied himself with as much activity as zeal in the cure of his unhappy friend. As he could not obtain at Milan any physician who had made the treatment of mental aberrations an object of special study, he thought of addressing himself to the celebrated Scarpa, whom he had known at Pavia. Scarpa immediately pointed out to him an old pupil of his, a native of Como, who had studied in England for two years under the celebrated Dr. Willis, (the famous physician of George III., who cured that monarch in his first delirium) and who had subsequently come to settle in his native country. Valville did not hesitate a moment. He set out for Como, hired on the brink of the lake, near the

entrance of the town, one of those pretty country dwellings, where every year so many English families come to spend the summer, and there took up his abode with La Cesia and the chasseur who waited on him.

Dr. Scalpelli, for he was the person to whom Scarpa alluded, previous to entering on the treatment of the patient that had been brought to him, wished to learn at as much length as possible his tastes, his habits, his character, the extent of his understanding, and above all, the cause, if possible, of his malady. Valville concealed nothing from him, unless it was the rank and the name of the patient, which he thought had no concern with the mode of cure. As to the accident which led to the loss of his reason, he attributed that to the sudden effect of terrible disappointment, that had at once and unexpectedly destroyed all the hopes on which the happiness of

his life depended. Having received this information, the physician occupied his first visit in examining with extreme care not only the pulse of his patient, but his countenance, his appearance, even his gestures. Scalpelli had received from nature the most precious of gifts to those who consecrate themselves to the study of an art which of all others demands the keenest observation, and where observation must of necessity serve as a guide to knowledge. His was one of those penetrating glances which seem to pierce into the soul through all the doublings and concealments of the human heart. La Cesia, on encountering his searching eye, involuntarily cast down his own; and as if a species of instinct had induced him to fear an investigation from which he could not escape, he kept his eyelids half closed so long as Scalpelli remained. The doctor did not wish to thwart

his patient's humour, and contenting himself with some simple prescriptions, he withdrew. It was not until after passing, at various periods of the day, several hours in a similar examination, and even after beholding him while he slept, that he entered on the conversation with Valville which I am now about to relate. "If it has justly become a proverb," begun Scalpelli, "that we ought to conceal nothing from the doctor, in no case is it more just than where the delicate and difficult task is sought to be imposed on him of re-establishing violated order in the exercise of the intellectual functions. For in those cases, the disease that might have yielded to suitable treatment, may easily become incurable, if he have been deceived by false intelligence, and pursued a wrong course in attempting to remove it. Yet, obvious as is this truth, I have reason to believe that, in the

present case, you have concealed the true cause from me that has deprived your friend of his reason. You have told me of mighty reverses, of hopes of fortune suddenly quenched ; now every symptom denotes, on the contrary, a violent and profound passion, one of those delirious attachments that absorb every faculty of the soul, and distract the whole existence. Do not imagine that I ground my judgment on simple conjectures. If the heart were not affected, if it were not the real seat of the evil, how happens it where there is no organic injury, and where the formation of the whole person is so perfect as it is in this young man, who might serve as a model for the sculptor—how comes it that the chest is so much oppressed? And why, in his slumbers more especially, do those deep and frequent sighs heave his bosom? On the other hand, observe his looks ;

you do not find there any symptoms of the vague insipidity of ordinary fatuity, nor the fixed despair of insanity. Far from it: sometimes his eyes are turned to heaven with the most singular brilliancy of expression, he appears like one in an ecstasy of ravishment; and if those brief intervals are succeeded by severe agitation and convulsive movements, all that succession of feeling is easily and readily explained into the violent transports of jealousy, and the thirst of vengeance pushed even to phrensy."

Valville, who was struck with the justness of these remarks, replied, that had he had any knowledge of a passion, the consequences of which might be so fatal, he would not have failed to inform him of it; but that, if it existed at all, his friend had always carefully concealed it. He added, that at any rate it appeared strange to attribute exclusively to love an affec-

tion that had only seized La Cesia in quitting the office of the director of the police at Milan, whither he had gone on affairs of pure business. Scalpelli was not staggered in his opinion by this circumstance. What are termed by medical men the diagnostics, were too well marked to leave the slightest doubt.

"If I were informed," said he to Valville, "of all the circumstances connected with this unhappy event, I might discover the solution of an enigma which to you appears inexplicable. It is the more important to have that knowledge soon, as all remedies, all the resources of the healing art, however multiplied they may be now-a-days, are almost valueless in respect to this description of mental alienation; while, on the other hand, we frequently see such a malady yield at once to the influence of some fortunate change in our moral relations.

But how can I profit by a mode of cure to which chance alone can direct me, and which it is absolutely impossible to bring to the patient so long as I remain in complete ignorance of the antecedents of the disease? 'Tis your part, sir, to discover, either in his papers or by inquiries directed to those who have been intimate with him, or finally by calling your own recollections to your aid, some clue that may place me in the right road to success. In the mean time, I shall devote my attention to what I may term the physical part of the disease."

These arguments persuaded Valville; and he sought in consequence, by recalling all the various conversations that he had had with La Cesia, to discover some indications of an affection so violent and so miserable. His first thoughts led him towards the Countess Gradiska, of whom the count had often praised both

the beauty and the intelligence; but when he thought on the calm and uninterested air with which he spoke of her, he could not persuade himself that she was the object of a passion capable of producing such terrible effects. As a test, however, of his judgment, and with a view to relieve his doubts, he thought of pronouncing her name in the presence of the patient in one of his lucid intervals; but the absence of any thing like emotion when he did so, sufficiently proved that the cause of his alienation must be sought elsewhere. It was in vain he addressed himself to the banker of Milan, he had entirely lost sight of the count from the period of his departure from Vienna; and while they resided in that capital, he had never heard of any other connexion than that with the Countess Gradiska: a connexion which, as we said before, was so very public, that it was commonly believed

they were privately married. The indifferent success of these attempts did not discourage Valville: he wrote to his correspondents at Rome, at Naples, at Florence, in all of which towns La Cesia had for some time resided, earnestly requesting that the most minute inquiries should be made in respect of any intimacy that he might have contracted; and while he waited the result of these well-meant inquiries, he continued to lavish on him all the care that his condition could demand from the most tender, the most zealous, and active friendship. La Cesia had now been nearly a month at Como; and in spite of the talents and of the assiduous cares of the physician that attended on him, his condition was very little ameliorated. The violence of the febrile action had indeed in some degree diminished, but his reason continued notwithstanding habitually

confused; and if he now and then appeared to recover the use of it, those lucid intervals were of short duration, and they disappeared on the slightest opposition to his caprices. He was in one of those happy moments one day, at the time that Scalpelli was paying him his usual visit, when a servant from the house of the latter entering the room in great haste to say that he had come to require the assistance of the doctor for the Marquis Varèze, who had suffered from a paralytic attack.

At the name of Varèze, La Cesia uttered a shriek of terror, and convulsive shiverings shook the whole of his frame. The astonished doctor directing his searching eyes towards the patient, repeated the name—

"Yes, I am called to attend on the Marquis Varèze; do you know any thing about him?"

La Cesia opened his lips, as if to reply; but

suddenly covering his forehead with his two hands, he bent down his face, and remained sullenly silent. Valville, who was present at this scene, knew not how to explain it, for he was completely ignorant of the relation that had existed between the count and the family of the marquis, and he was lost in his conjecturing what it might be. The physician, however, promised that he should follow up this slight indication.

When Scalpelli got to Blevio, he found the condition of the marquis more troublesome than dangerous; and having prescribed for him accordingly, he was about to quit the mansion in order to return to Como, but on Thomasine's pressing him to remain, he consented at length to pass the night there. Preoccupied with what he had witnessed in the morning at Como, he could not avoid mentioning during the con-

versation that took place in the course of the evening the history of the young Frenchman who was under his care, his mental alienation, and the singularly violent emotion which the name of the Marquis Varèze pronounced by accident in his hearing had occasioned. He mentioned also that his name was Noirval—that he was a merchant; he described his singularly fine countenance; and added, that, according to the testimony of his friends, his mental qualities were not inferior to his external advantages.

Madame de Steinman, notwithstanding the overwhelming sorrow into which she had been plunged by her fatal marriage, was not the less feelingly alive to the misfortunes of others, and far from discontinuing her charitable habits, they formed now her only source of enjoyment. It was with compassionate interest, therefore, that

she listened to the tale of the physician; but, when he added that he had every reason to believe that the real cause of the young man's malady was unhappily-placed affection, the sad similarity his case bore to her own brought involuntary tears to her eyes. She was however far from suspecting that she had any concern in it; for the name of Noirval, and the profession of French merchant, effectually concealed its mystery from her penetration.

On his return to Como, Scalpelli paid an immediate visit to the count. He found him in one of his calm intervals, although the traces of the agitation which he had experienced the day before had not entirely disappeared; and, as he was anxious to discover its cause, the doctor told him that he could now give him some news of the Marquis Varèze, in whom he appeared to be so much interested. The

mention of this name again affected the patient with a shivering fit; but he made no reply.

"The Marquis Varèze," continued Scalpelli, "of whom I am speaking to you, is he whose palace is situated at Blevio."

"Blevio!" exclaimed the unfortunate young man, in an accent of despair, while his haggard eyes expressed his terror.

"How happens it that Blevio inspires you with so much terror? It is one of the loveliest situations on the lake. I have some intention of conducting you thither, in order——."

"Me," replied La Cesia, eagerly, "to Blevio! me! Straight road to hell rather."

"What say you about hell?" replied Scalpelli. "Blevio is inhabited by an angel."

"An angel!" exclaimed La Cesia, wringing his hands; "a fallen angel—Thomasine!"

But the effort was too great for his strength;

he sunk back senseless; and slipping from the seat, rolled down on the floor. Scalpelli raised him up; and after administering such remedies as his case required, he went out in search of Valville, in order to make known the secret he had just discovered. That La Cesia was enamoured of the daughter of the Marquis of Varèze was abundantly evident; but when and where did this passion originate? Did it meet with a corresponding return? These were questions that it seemed impossible to answer. Meanwhile Valville, on recalling the whole of the circumstances which had preceded the interview that took place between his friend and Steinman, and the effect as sudden as it was deplorable which had resulted from it, began to imagine what was in reality the case, that he had only then for the first time learned the news of a union which destroyed all the

hopes he had been led to entertain ; and on his side Scalpelli, who had taken a principal share in that unhappy marriage, a share which he would have blushed to avow, was now led to attribute the marked aversion that Thomasine had invariably displayed for the German officiary to a previous attachment, over which the heroic devotedness of her filial piety had enabled her to triumph. There was but one fact, though that was an important one, opposed to this hypothesis.

"I cannot possibly explain," said Scalpelli to Valville, "how a young person of so much sensibility should in such circumstances give not the slightest indication of emotion when I pronounced the name of Noirval in her hearing."

"Nothing however is more natural," replied Valville, smiling; "trust me, it would have

been very different had you mentioned the name of the Count de la Cesia, a Piedmontese nobleman whom political circumstances had forced to conceal himself under the name of the banker Noirval. The knowledge of this little circumstance being useless to my unfortunate friend, I concealed it from you, although I had the utmost reliance on your honour. But now let us haste, I conjure you, to take advantage of what a happy chance has enabled you to discover. Your state of ignorance, you were wont to say, paralysed all your efforts; now that obstacle is removed, I expect the happiest result from your talents: in so able hands the resources of art——."

"Truce to compliments," replied Scalpelli, shaking his head; "it is true that I did not expect, nor do I now expect, any great relief from the remedies that the medical art fur-

nishes, so long as the mental wound remains uncured; but even at present, when the nature of the latter is actually known, I foresee difficulties of more than one description which leave me but small hopes. However, I shall try all I can; you must second my efforts, and perhaps we may succeed in restoring to society one whom excellent qualities and high talents summon to the performance of an exalted character there.

The wishes expressed by Scalpelli were perfectly sincere. He was most ardently desirous of La Cesia's recovery, because, in the first place, such a cure would not fail to enhance his reputation as a man of science; and next, because he felt in this unhappy young man that lively interest, or rather sympathy, which binds one mind of higher order to another with something resembling the ties of kindred.

The opinion that he had formed of the intellectual faculties of La Cesia was not founded on what Valville had told him; for on examining his papers, in the hope of obtaining some information that might be employed beneficially in his cure, he had found several fragments of works which in an eminent degree proved his possession of an exquisite style, and of the yet rarer gift of thoughts both sublime and original. Before, however, he set about the means of cure, he thought it of importance to ascertain the actual sentiments of Thomasine; and with that view he returned to Blevio. On quitting the apartment of the marquis, his daughter, as was her ordinary practice, accompanied him out, in order to learn his precise opinion of the old man's condition, when Scalpelli pretended that he was in haste to return to Como.

"The critical situation," he said, "of the young man who is deprived of his reason, whose case I mentioned to you the other evening, requires all my care: and, by-the-bye, I ought to state that he is not, as I announced him then, a French merchant; I have since learned that he is a Piedmontese noble, and that his name is Jerome de la Cesia."

At the sound of that name the lost Thomasine felt so violent an emotion that, had she not been supported by Scalpelli, she would have fallen to the ground. He led her to a seat; and with a tone of strong interest went on—

"I am aware, madam, of the cause of the emotion that you display, and it is in vain to conceal it from me. But take confidence, I beseech you; far from betraying your secret, my only object, my most sincere wish, is to give back reason to an unfortunate gentleman,

who is well qualified to make the most noble use of the gift. But I must declare to you, with all the experience derived from long practice, that in such cases the resources of art are insufficient. Love alone can heal the wound which love inflicted. It was on learning too suddenly you were lost to him that despair overwhelmed his reason. Yet his delirium is not continuous; and if in one of those intervals when he enjoys the use of his rational faculties he were to learn that you had in abandoning him only followed the dictates of the most imperious duty, and though consigned by necessity to the arms of another, that yet your heart was not changed, I do not doubt that his cure might be effected."

Madame de Steinman took some time to recover her self-possession. At length she replied, that every tie which once connected her

with the person of whom he spoke was now irrevocably broken.

"Alas!" replied the doctor, "I see it; you cannot indeed subdue your affections to the dictates of your will, but you can regulate your conduct according to it. Leave then the sorrows of blasted affection a free course, and convert them into a healing balm, a source of salvation to him that once was, that still is dear to you——."

"No!" exclaimed Thomasine, interrupting him; "virtue, honour, every duty calls on me to consummate the sacrifice I have in part offered."

"Well, well," said the doctor sharply, "what severity of principle, pushed to excess, forbids to you, my duty, on the contrary, imposes on me." So saying he departed, leaving Thomasine in the deepest possible distress. Scalpelli was too

skilful an adept in that part of physiological science which is connected with a knowledge of the human heart, to believe that he could produce any very marked effect on the mental condition of his patient by limiting himself to the mere communication of what he had just learned; so deep a wound as that of La Cesia required more powerful and searching remedies; but before their adoption a good deal of management was absolutely necessary. He had observed that the accessions of the delirious fits which returned with nearly periodical regularity every week, were followed by a state of languor and sadness which disposed the patient to feelings of kindliness. In one of those intervals of calm he approached La Cesia, and taking his hand very affectionately, "Your sorrows," said he, "affect me very sensibly; but time and chance bring about the most

unexpected events, and in the meanwhile courage can support misfortune even in the weakest sex. I can never cease sufficiently to admire the resignation of the daughter of one of our lords, in a town in this neighbourhood, that I am in the habit of attending. She is as distinguished by her beauty as she is by her virtues; and she has renounced an alliance which would have completed her happiness, merely for the sake of sparing her father the horrors of a captivity which threatened to compromise his days."

The count gave some signs of emotion; but in a short time, curling his brow, he replied with bitterness—"When people are sinking under the burden of their own misfortunes, they have no tears to spare for those of strangers."

"Strangers!" exclaimed Scalpelli in a lively tone; "why no case that ever existed affects

you more intimately. She to whom I alluded is your dear friend Thomasine, who has never ceased to love you."

"Who said so?" cried the distracted count.

"She herself."

"Can it be so? But no—it is an illusion, a frightful dream, leading to a more frightful awakening. And, thou wretch," added he, his tone increasing in animation by degrees, "if thou deceivest me, thy life shall answer for the falsehood."

La Cesia finished the sentence with a menacing gesture of his hand, and his kindling eyes announced the approach of one of his fits of fury. The physician was not at all alarmed at it. He had been taught by Willis the almost magic art of attaining an irresistible ascendant over the insane, who even in their wildest wanderings still preserve a glimmering of reason.

It is necessary to have been a witness of such methods, in order to conceive the extent of an authority which is principally based in conduct invariably firm, benevolent, and just. The submission of the patient, which is as absolute as that of childhood to a parent, is in fact inspired by the same sentiment—a feeling of mental weakness and of inferiority of condition; it is a mixture of fear, attachment, and gratitude. Scalpelli, in the present circumstances, had no need, for the purpose of repressing the violence of the count, of any other means than one of his severe looks—"I am anxious for your welfare," said he, "and I shall pursue it; but calm these fits of passion, which only augment your sickness, or else the strait-waistcoat shall reply to you." As he pronounced these words with a firm voice, he pointed with

his finger to that dreaded instrument of punishment which is the terror of the insane.

La Cesia shuddered in every limb; and in a short time falling back on his chair, he covered his eyes with his hands, and sunk into obstinate silence. Scalpelli then retired. What he had just witnessed, and what he had learned at Blevio, convinced him that the count would infallibly recover the use of his reason were he once assured of the truth that his mistress had never betrayed him; but then it was she, and she only, that could assure him of this; and how was the decided explanation to take place? The pride and obstinate resentment of La Cesia did not appear to Scalpelli more insurmountable than the virtuous reserve of Thomasine. He concluded, therefore, that the meeting of the two lovers could not be brought

about but by means independent of their will, and he resolved to employ for that purpose all the resources of his wit and perseverance of his character.

CHAPTER XII.

Scalpelli, in examining successively into every department of the *Materia Medica*, had given his particular attention to poisonous substances; and his researches had not been directed solely from a wish to combat their deleterious qualities, he had pursued them with a higher view. Impressed by the energy with which they acted on the human frame, he had repeatedly put the question to himself, whether by modifying them they might not be made to

contribute to some useful purpose. With this view, and guided by the lights of modern chymistry, by analysing carefully the most deadly poisons, by trying on his own person the most hazardous experiments, he feared not to grope in that arsenal where nature has laid up her instruments of death in order to discover some article of offensive armour against their attacks; an undertaking less brilliant, but not less bold than that of the learned doctor who first dared to draw down from the clouds the growling thunder, and to exhibit it at his feet powerless and disarmed. In vain is it that misanthropic chagrin persists in undervaluing the dignity of man, by presenting to our contemplation nothing but a picture of his vices and his errors; the chief of creation bursts forth in all his native dignity when such marks of genius recall his divine origin.

The physician of Como had been greatly successful in the dangerous career into which his love of science had led him. The institute of Bologna had recompensed his zeal and its results by an honourable testimony, by inserting in its acts his Dissertation upon Opium, which was full of ideas as novel as they were ingenious. Subsequent to that time he had pursued his researches respecting the action of that medicine, so commonly used, and yet so uncertain in its effects; and he had succeeded in extracting from it the principle to which alone it owes its astonishing power of laying the senses to slumber, and of holding life itself, as it were, suspended.* Passing next to the

* This principle, which is now known in the pharmacopœias under the name of *narcotine*, differs essentially from *morphine*, a poison equally terrible and violent, long celebrated in the annals of crime.

application of this principle, he composed from it a potion at once soothing and somnific, the secret of which he kept to himself; and this medicine, the dose of which he regulated according to the age and strength of the patient, and the effect that he wished to produce, at the same time that it produced the deepest slumber, acted with such absolute certainty, that he could within an hour predict the termination of the slumber that it occasioned.

He had used it advantageously in the beginning of his treatment of La Cesia's case; and it was by means of it that he had frequently procured for him a refreshing sleep after his most violent fits. Now, however, he was desirous to resort to it not as a means of cure, but in despair of prevailing on the count to accompany him to Blevio when he went thither; he saw no other expedient of procuring for him an interview

which he deemed essential to his recovery, but to carry him thither without his knowledge. He communicated this project to Valville, who approved of it; and they began accordingly to make the preparations requisite for carrying it into prompt execution. This was not, however, enough. Obstacles of a more insurmountable character were to be got over in respect of Thomasine. Scalpelli was not ignorant of these, but neither was he discouraged by them. It is the peculiarity of a mind fertile in resources to take advantage of circumstances which appear absolutely foreign to the purpose they propose to gain. It was thus that the malady of the Marquis of Varèze furnished Scalpelli with an opportunity of succeeding in his object. There was, it is true, no longer any fears of his life; but the palsy, which deprived him of the use of a part of his limbs,

refused to yield to ordinary remedies; and Scalpelli, without being cast down, determined to have recourse to others more efficacious. He kept up a constant correspondence with some of the most able practitioners in Vienna, Paris, and Edinburgh; he was in the habit, moreover, of consulting the numerous periodicals, which serve, if we may so express it, as a sort of telegraphs to the scientific world, and render available to all in common the inexhaustible treasure of observation, of experience, and of discovery, that is receiving continual augmentation from the labours of genius. Thanks to the rapidity with which such communications now travel, the light of learning, like that of the sun, enlightens all nations by one and the same ray.

Scalpelli had been repeatedly struck with the great advantages that recent mechanical

contrivances had enabled the physician to derive from liquid and vapour baths, which used to be so much in request among the ancients for re-animating motion in palsied limbs. He had proposed, in consequence, to Thomasine to try the new methods; and the idea being eagerly caught at, he had given directions to a skilful mechanic of Como to prepare the necessary machine. As soon as it was finished he had it placed in a covered gondola; and having about midnight caused La Cesia to take a dose of his narcotic draught, which immediately produced the wished-for effect, by the aid of Valville and Karl he had him placed in the boat, and daylight was hardly yet peeping when they arrived at Blevio. Under favour of the twilight of the morning he was carefully carried ashore, and deposited in an apartment on the ground-floor in the Palace Varèze, which

was prepared for the reception of the bathing machine; and where a large bathing-vessel, and a sofa surrounded by screens, had been placed, in order to enable the marquis to partake of them. The count, wrapped carefully in his cloak, and profoundly sleeping, was cautiously placed on the couch. Thomasine, who always rose with the sun, being informed of the arrival of the doctor, immediately went to join him, in order that she might inform him in what state the marquis her father was, and consult with him in respect of the mode of treatment that was in future to be followed. As she entered into the room, he advanced a few steps to meet her, and addressing her—"Madam," said he, "every thing is ready; the workmen from Como have exactly fulfilled my instructions, and I have every reason to suppose that the marquis will receive the most signal advan-

tage from the trial we are about to enter on. But, madam, there is another patient in whom I take a lively interest, and whose condition demands all my care. The young man of whom I spoke to you——"

Thomasine, blushing deeply, here interrupted Scalpelli, by saying that she did not wish him to speak to her on any other subject but that of her father.

"In truth," returned he, with a tone of strong feeling, "if I address myself to you, it is only because I have already exhausted all the resources of my art, and because you only of all human beings can give back to him that reason, which is a more precious possession than life itself."

"No, I can do nothing—my duty—Heaven that now hears me——."

"Heaven, above all duties, prescribes that of

humanity; and believe me that I respect you much too highly to ask you to do aught contrary to your duty. My intentions are pure.—But moments are precious. There, behind that screen, on the couch that has been prepared for your father, the man whom you once loved so well awaits his judgment at your hands. But you totter; lean on my arm, and endeavour to be calm. He hears us not, he is plunged in an almost lethargic slumber; and he has been carried to the palace without even his being conscious of it."

"What would you have me do? What can I do to save him?"

The physician looked at his watch.

"In a few minutes," said he, "sleep will leave him. All that I ask of you, and you surely cannot refuse it, is to tell him who received your earliest pledges of affection; that

you have not betrayed him, but that filial piety——."

He was unable to finish the sentence. Thomasine felt her knees totter beneath her, and grasped at one of the screens, which, but indifferently supported, fell with a loud noise. The sound echoing through the vaults of the chamber accelerated the awaking of the count, who, uttering a deep sigh, immediately raised himself up; and the first glance that he cast around him met the eyes of his adored.

Astonishment, affection, and doubt, agitated his mind by turns. He uttered a few unconnected words; but in a moment he covered his eyes, as if for the purpose of shutting out a vision that had importunately broke in upon him.

Scalpelli, who watched all his motions, was afraid that this state of doubt might injure his reasoning powers rather than assist them, and

approaching him, said in an affectionate tone—"My friend, we are at Blevio, and Thomasine Varèze is actually before you. It was my desire, it was in fact absolutely essential to your repose and to hers, that she herself should inform you of the motives of her conduct.

"Speak, madam," he added, "from so pure lips nothing but truth can issue."

"Ah, what can I say?" replied Thomasine, melting into tears; "doctor, you crush my very soul."

"At last, then," exclaimed La Cesia, gathering animation by degrees, "through the strange obscurity that surrounds me, I begin to perceive the cause of my misfortunes. It was that wretched old man, it was thy father, Thomasine, that sacrificed thee. But let him tremble;

even my contempt of his weakness shall not save him from my vengeance."

In pronouncing these words his gestures were so terrible, that the distracted Thomasine could not avoid casting herself at his knees and crying out—"Mercy, mercy, for my father! —on me, on me alone, let the burden of your vengeance fall—I alone am guilty. Alas! his liberty and his life were threatened. I sacrificed myself; but, far from advising the offering I made, he long and urgently resisted it. I call Scalpelli to testify the truth of what I say."

"It is most true," replied Scalpelli, looking down; for this unexpected appeal, by recalling the memory of the crime he had committed, made him feel the dart of remorse because of it: in seeking, however, to conceal his con-

fusion, he added, with a tone of authority which his profession entitled him to use—"This interview must not be prolonged; it might otherwise be attended with fatal consequences. Retire, madam; fear nothing for your father; I answer for his safety." Then turning to La Cesia, and taking advantage of the ascendancy he had gained over him, he took him by the arm and led him out, saying in a firm tone—

"This is enough for the first time—you shall see each other again."

The young man followed him without struggle. He had recovered his reason, but his head was feeble, and he felt it to be so; and there was a confusion in his ideas that rendered him sensible of his need of assistance. Even under these circumstances, however, the pride of his character was not undiscernible in the expression of his countenance. But like the

enormous lion which the famous Hassan Pacha was wont to lead about with him, he was not the less docile and obedient to him that had subdued him.

CHAPTER XIII.

When La Cesia had once more reached Como, he was in a state of mind that it would be difficult to describe; so many confused and even opposite ideas, crossed and jostled each other in his burning brain. Yet, as Scalpelli had foreseen, his mental condition was changed decidedly for the better from the moment that he received proof positive that she whom he adored had sacrificed herself to the good of her father, although his affections remained un-

changed. The preference supposed to have been gained over him by an unworthy rival, a most humiliating thought which had very much aggravated his disease, no longer wounded his pride; but, on the other hand, the generous devotedness of Thomasine, and the fresh proof she had given of her nobleness of soul, made him feel but the more deeply the greatness of the loss he had sustained. The physician marked with extreme uneasiness the agitation that was produced by these varying emotions; for he was aware that above all things calm was necessary to consolidate the cure of so deep and so painful a wound. But in vain had he offered any subject of amusement to a man so deeply impassioned; it was impossible to hope to produce any impression on him, but by exhibiting to him some hope in the future to compensate for the sorrows of the past. Scalpelli, therefore, on enter-

ing into a serious discussion with him, endeavoured to show that any contract founded on a consent extorted by violence or procured by fraud, was in its nature essentially null and void. Human laws and divine laws were at one on this point; and marriage, the most holy of contracts, was of course comprehended under the general rule. "A day will doubtless arrive," said he, "and it is not far distant, when this mystery of iniquity will be unsealed, and when a legal dissolution will put an end to this ill-assorted match. In fact," continued Scalpelli, "in love there are no irremediable evils but death or inconstancy; but above all things you must get into such a state of health as to be capable of taking advantage of opportunity, if any should occur, or rather of producing it if it do not. You must recover the perfect use of your wonted energy, and of all

your faculties. Happily from this day your recovery depends on yourself alone. Drive far from your mind all subjects of irritation; follow, without for a moment departing from it, the mild and simple regimen that I shall prescribe for you, and your recovery will very soon be complete. In the mean time we lose no time. You see with what confidence I am treated in the Varèze family—I will look to your interests there."

These counsels were sage; and the count, who now enjoyed the use of reason, though his faculties were in too weak a condition to be capable of sustaining continuous application, perceived that they were so. He promised to follow them; and affected by the tender care that his physician lavished on him, he accepted his offers of service with due gratitude.

When we recollect the character played by

Scalpelli in the beginning of this unhappy affair, his intentions will appear more than suspicious; and it is but natural that the reader should anticipate some fresh instance of perfidy. He will however judge unjustly of the doctor, whose protestations were on this occasion really sincere; and who, as the event proved, was most honestly anxious to repair in some way the wrongs he had committed against the desolate family. But to what must we attribute so sudden a change? Had virtue, by a sort of *coup de main*, gained a victory over the vicious propensities of his nature? The thought would be a consolatory one; but truth forbids its indulgence. Unquestionably repentance had more than once made Scalpelli feel her barbed dart in his guilty heart; but alas! remorse is common, but reformation is rare; and we feel compelled to declare that

his return to justice was not the result either of pure or disinterested feelings. Base cupidity had impelled him to commit the wrong; and a passion not more honourable impelled him to attempt its remedy—the passion of revenge.

No one ever learned or ever will, the exact details of the transactions between Scalpelli and Steinman, in respect of the payment promised by the latter in consideration of the physician's detestable manœuvring. All that is certainly known is, that the bill to order was never completely discharged; that an extension of the period for the payment of the remainder was asked and granted; and that when the deferred period arrived the director-general of the police took advantage of certain inconsiderate expressions of Scalpelli respecting the government, and replied to his request of payment by a threat, if he persisted in it,

of an information and a prosecution for high treason.

Indignant at such dishonesty, but compelled notwithstanding to conceal his resentment, the Comoese doctor swore he would be revenged; and he failed not to seize the opportunity that fortune presented to him of troubling for ever a union on which his enemy had rested his hopes of fortune and happiness. In acting thus he did not alone satiate his vindictive character; he felt besides a pleasure in serving a young man to whose misfortunes he had so much contributed, and who had now inspired him with a real affection. He became attached to him in the first instance, as ordinarily happens, from the attentions that he had paid to his case; and besides this there had grown up between the two young men that species of sympathy which intimate union never

fails to produce between two minds of a superior order, that sort of mutual kindness which cannot be better described than by its assimilation to what is felt by natives of the same town when they meet on a foreign strand.

Scalpelli, meanwhile, was impatiently expected at Blevio, and he made haste to return thither. He found the malady of the marquis no worse, but he found the health of his daughter seriously affected. The unexpected appearance of him whom she had so devotedly loved, and whom, without being able to resist it, she still adored in her heart, had occasioned her a shock, which in her delicate condition might be attended with serious consequences. A violent fever made its appearance that very night, and for several days great fear was entertained of a miscarriage. The strength of her constitution, however, prevailed, and a few

weeks of repose gave her back her health, which had been so severely shaken. Hitherto she had regularly avoided speaking to Scalpelli on the subject of the events that took place in the bathing-room ; but one day after her recovery, when she happened to be alone with him, she presented to him a sealed letter, which she requested him not to open until he reached Como. As this letter had great influence over the events that followed its delivery, we shall copy it here.

MADAME DE STEINMAN TO DR. SCALPELLI.

Blevio, 16*th October*, 1821.

Sir,

Extraordinary circumstances, connected with the exercise of your profession, have given you an opportunity of learning certain secrets that

deeply affect the honour and the peace of the Marquis Varèze. I should have ardently desired that they never should be revealed—my only satisfaction now is, that they are deposited in honourable hands. I address you then with confidence, under the necessity that I feel myself placed to declare my intentions for the last time to him to whom your cares have lately been directed. If, as I hope, the result of that interview which you took on you to bring about without consulting me, has been favourable to him, I regret not the evil that it has caused; and so much the less, that I have reason for expecting that it will not be followed by all the mischievous consequences that I at one time anticipated from it. But what I most earnestly request of you is, to give to your friend a detailed account of the persecutions to which my father was subjected, and from which,

you are well aware, could the relinquishment of my fortune have saved him, it would have been cheerfully made. He is generous in his nature, and will not fail to appreciate my motives. Had he been situated as I was, would he have done less? Let him pity me, but let him not, I entreat, seek to aggravate my distress by attempting to reunite a band which is torn asunder for ever. The confusion into which his unexpected appearance threw me may well excuse any symptoms that I may have betrayed of my former sentiments, but my determination to break off every connexion with him is not the less irrevocable. Yours, eternally obliged,

THOMASINE DE STEINMAN.

The perusal of this letter enlightened Scalpelli; he knew that Thomasine was pure and virtuous, and that nothing would prevail on

her to abandon the line of her duty; but he had not imagined that while so indulgent to others she would push her principles to such scrupulous rigidity. He was especially struck by the character of irrevocability that appeared in this determinate declaration to cease from all communication with the man whom she loved. It was now evident that she would never consent to the steps which they might have been tempted to take with the civil and religious authorities of the country in order to procure a dissolution of her marriage, and that any attempt of the kind must prove altogether chimerical. In fact, the doctor, in holding out to La Cesia that flattering prospect, had made use of the privilege of people of his profession, who must frequently give assurance of hope to their patients, and inspire them with a confidence in which they themselves do not at

all participate; nor are they wrong in this; for experience has proved that such illusions are not among the least efficacious of their remedies. In the present case the success that followed had justified the attempt of the surgeon; and the state of the count's health was so satisfactory that all fears of a relapse were visionary. Sometimes, it is true, after violent mental struggles, he experienced pains in his head, and even a degree of confusion in his ideas, but the open air and gentle exercise soon sufficed to dissipate those momentary symptoms of recurring malady; which left behind them no deeper traces than do those light clouds which in the tail of the storm are often seen hurrying over the disk of the sun, but without darkening or troubling the brilliancy and serenity of the atmosphere. The nicety of management which his weakness

demanded being no longer required, Scalpelli did not hesitate to inform him of Thomasine's resolution: although seeking at the same time to soften as much as possible the painfulness of the communication, he commenced it by an assurance that the heart of his former mistress was still the same; that she loved as deeply as ever she had done; and groaned in secret over the sacrifice that she had imposed on herself, at the moment even when an idea, perhaps exaggerated, of her new duties, led her to regard as indissoluble the ties that she had contracted. At last, however, he was compelled to allow the truth to escape, and to state frankly that Thomasine had made up her mind to break with him for ever. This bad news affected La Cesia very deeply, although he still retained some hope of overcoming her resolution. "It was rare," he

said, "that such determinations turned out irrevocable; and he would still try what another interview might effect."

"I am much afraid," said the physician, shaking his head, "that your efforts will be made in vain. But," he added, presenting to him the letter which we have just copied for our readers, "you may yourself judge of her disposition. Here is what she writes to me, unquestionably for the purpose of its being shown to you."

La Cesia eagerly seized the writing. Whilst he was running his eye over it he checked any emotions he felt; but when he turned the page, and when the signature met his view, "Thomasine de Steinman!" exclaimed he in a fury, and tearing with his teeth the name of his hated rival, and foaming with rage, he spit the fragments from him. His whole body was

agitated with convulsive trembling; his cheeks grew palid, his lips livid and quivering, and incapable of uttering but half-formed sounds. These symptoms of anger inflamed to excess did not alarm Scalpelli, who with great satisfaction perceived that his head remained unaffected by the paroxysm; he was not however the less anxious to calm the transport down, and to direct his ideas into other channels. He represented to him, therefore, that the critical position in which political events had then placed him, as well as the dictates of ordinary prudence imperiously demanded, that he should remove from a spot where he ran every moment the risk of being denounced and arrested.

"In quitting this neighbourhood," said he, "you carry at least along with you the certainty so consoling to a mind at once proud

and affectionate, that you are still tenderly beloved. It is impossible you should doubt that your sorrows, however severe, are at least participated; and your misfortunes after all are attributable not to the caprice but to the virtues—."

"Virtues!" exclaimed La Cesia, in a tone of indignant disdain; "high-sounding and meaningless term! Know, sir, that if I despise meanness and vice, it is not because I estimate highly what men call virtue. No, no! in this world of misery and of folly, I recognise nothing as equitable but the retributive part of the system. 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,' such has always been, such shall ever be, my virtue. The forgiveness of injuries, that pretended generosity, is at bottom nought but weakness and cowardice."

This erroneous doctrine, which is but too

generally spread throughout the two peninsulas in the south of Europe, was too consonant with the opinions of Scalpelli to be combated by him; on the contrary, his reply tended to strengthen it.

"I approve, because I participate in your sentiments. There is in strong minds an elasticity, a spring, which instantly re-acts against whatever tends to depress or hurt it. Resentment of injuries is then a most natural passion; it formed the basis of the old *lex talionis*, the most just of all penal laws. But unless resentment be guided by prudence, unless it wait until the minute of vengeance has come, it may lose what it aims to secure from its own impatience of delay. You must, therefore, be moderate, or rather you must postpone every hostile attempt, which in your present circumstances would not fail to compromise your

safety.—Forget not that you have an object to effect—."

" In fact I have an object, an important one," said La Cesia, interrupting him, " one with which my very existence is mixed up. Leave me to think of——." In uttering these words, he quitted the doctor abruptly, and abandoning the house, he took the path that led towards the mountain, and was speedily out of sight.

CHAPTER XIV.

La Cesia, when he had reached the summit of the hill, sat down on the point of a rock where he had a clear view of the western branch of the Lake of Como, and gave a free course to the various thoughts that agitated his mind. There was one feeling predominated over all the rest, and that feeling was an unextinguishable thirst of revenge, a terrible passion, which, when carried to such excess, assumes the character of actual phrensy, of which the old inhabitants of the north witness few examples. He had

felt the access of this passion from the moment of his interview with Steinman; and the consequences would have been fatal to the one or to the other, or both, had it not been for the long attack of delirium, which deprived him of the power of executing his dark projects. From the period that he had recovered his reason, the hopes with which the physician had flattered him, and perhaps also the remains of his physical as well as mental weakness, had deadened the violence of his resentment, but the letter of Thomasine to Scalpelli restored it to all its energy. The most astonishing effect, however, that this fatal letter produced on the mind of the count, was a total change, or rather a sudden revolution in his affections. His love for the daughter of the Marquis Varèze, that ardent love which appeared to be essential to his existence, was in an instant extinguished. When for the purpose of saving her father Thomasine sacrificed herself to an unworthy rival, the keen anguish which he felt did not in any degree diminish his tenderness. Her conduct was justified by filial duty, and he recognised in her the

victim of a moral force, for whose effects she was not to be called to account, any more than if by physical violence she had been carried off by the chief of a band of robbers. But when she declared that she would break for ever all those ties that he had hitherto looked on as sacred; and when she renounced, independent of his participation in her renunciation, their reciprocal engagements; she committed in his eyes a breach of faith, an act of perfidy, that admitted of no excuse. The reproach thus offered to Thomasine was most unjust. It was evident that her sensitive conscience had imposed on her another sacrifice, and that in obeying its dictates she was fulfilling with regret a painful duty; but his irritated pride would not admit of reasoning; his imperious character could not form an idea of affection, without attaching to it the right of domineering in the person that loved. By such tempers, every attempt on the part of the beloved object to withdraw itself from the dependence to which it has been subjected, is regarded as an act of rebellion which justifies an abandonment of all concern about it.

As La Cesia was thenceforth restrained by no

tie, he studied thenceforth no object but the indulgence of the spirit of revenge which actuated him. He was determined on rendering it if possible complete and memorable; and he exhausted his fertile imagination in inventing means of accumulating sorrow and suffering on the devoted head of his enemy.

Whilst he was thus absorbed in these sombre thoughts, he could not keep from repeating, almost mechanically, the kind of terrible burden which he had before uttered in coming from Steinman's office at Milan,—"Death is too little for him."

In fact, so far from any attempt on his life, he would have exposed his own in order to preserve him from instant danger, lest he should escape from the long and lingering death which he proposed to inflict upon him. All of a sudden he started up, and as if struck with sudden inspiration, like the famous mathematician of Syracuse,—

"I have it," he exclaimed; "I have it—the solution of this problem of misfortune. He shall suffer at one and the same time in every thing he holds dear! She whom he dares to call wife, and

who is about to make him a father, shall be snatched by violence from him. He shall know that she is in the power of a rival, and that rival a favoured one; and the uncertainty of the fate that awaits her as well as her offspring shall add to his grief the torment of perplexity. I shall do yet more, I shall make known his infamous conduct to the government which he serves, that he may lose at one and the same moment, honour and fortune and peace."

In pronouncing this anathema, which he bound himself to effect by a solemn and dreadful oath, his eyes shot forth that sinistrous light, and his cheek glowed with that warmth, and his smile exhibited that ferocity of joy, which are ordinarily given to the prince of darkness when he is described as gloating over the reprobates whom he has dragged down to the abyss, and rejoicing at the success of the plots by which their ruin has been completed.

The resolution which he had thus adopted being irrevocably formed, La Cesia hastened to descend from the mountain. When he arrived at his lodgings he shut himself up in his chamber,

in order that he might examine in detail the particulars of the plan that he had conceived; and which, although imposed by a passion that was as insane as chimerical in its appearance, was nevertheless no suggestion of a delirious imagination, for he had not adopted it until he had carefully weighed the means of accomplishing it. Unquestionably the difficulties were not small, but they were not insurmountable; and Cesia was one of those men of ten thousand, whose talents and energy obstacles only serve to sharpen and augment. He in this respect resembled that mighty conqueror, whom we beheld for such a length of years making nations and kings to tremble; ever and anon producing some grand plan or other, which at first appearance bore every mark of headlong rashness, but which was pursued with so much rapidity and so much wisdom, that its issues were victory and safety. Boundless and adventurous as was his mind, he yet contrived always to balance the audacity of his designs by the admirable prudence of his preparative steps; nor was he ever so dazzled by their greatness as

to neglect the slightest chance of ensuring their success.

The count was not indeed like Napoleon at the head of the forces of a great empire, nor had he Europe for his antagonist; but genius is not to be measured by the greatness of its objects, nor the importance of its results; it is to be estimated by a comparison of the means which it has to employ, and the difficulties which it has to overcome.

Let us examine those that opposed the plans which La Cesia meditated. The point at which he aimed was no less than to carry off a young married lady, who was surrounded by her family and by numerous domestics, and that against her inclination. Neither was there the least chance of surprising her without the palace of her father, for since his last sickness she hardly ever quitted his apartment. But even granting this hazardous attempt to be crowned with success, what probability was there of his passing a frontier guarded by detachments of troops of the line, and of customhouse officers, without being perceived and intercepted? This was at all times a matter of

extreme difficulty; but the difficulty must necessarily be greatly increased when the director-general of the police was personally interested in preventing his passage. How could he hope to escape from the sharpened vigilance of the numerous agents, who would not fail to hurry from every point to intercept the ravisher? Lastly, admitting every thing to succeed as he wished, he must find in a foreign land an asylum impenetrable to every eye; since it was not at all to be doubted that requisitions accompanied with minute descriptions of the parties would be sent to all the neighbouring governments; and that in case of discovery, their arrest and their delivery to justice would not once be questioned. But whatever difficulties the abduction of Thomasine might under such circumstances present to his contemplation, La Cesia, by his numerous precautions and arrangements, of which we shall speak by-and-by, had but one concern, and that was the place of his retreat when it was effected. At one time he thought of the mountains of the Tesino, where at a previous period of our history it will be remembered he took up his abode. This territory was at

a distance from society, and almost savage; and he felt persuaded that in a rude shealing, surrounded by almost inaccessible rocks, an eagle's flight above the level of the plain, and under the protection of vigilant and trusty friends, his prey would be secure. But a very little reflection induced him to abandon all thought of that place. The district of Mendreses was but a few leagues from the lake of Como, and the emissaries of Steinman had only to discover the very first traces of his route in order to place him in danger. He might, indeed, remove from the frontier and plunge into the interior of Switzerland, but then he knew no one there to whose assistance he could have recourse in case of need, whilst in France he had a tried friend, and she was at the head of a powerful party. Besides, a great nation has this important advantage, that it is more easy to remain concealed among and confounded with its crowded population, than to dwell unknown in the midst of one that is thinly scattered, and where strangers naturally attract attention.

La Cesia reckoned on the friendship of the Countess Gradiska, for he knew that she was as-

active as obliging; and the recent service she had done him without asking it, was a fresh proof that the name of brother and sister, which they had given to each other for several years, were not mere sounds, but the sincere expression of their mutual sentiments. He wrote to her to say that he meant to visit Paris as soon as he could do so in safety; but that his situation, which was then more critical than ever, compelled him to cast over the place of his residence an impenetrable veil; and therefore he entreated her to procure for him in the country, and at a distance from the capital, some asylum where he might be secret and secure. He did not deem it prudent to say any thing of his ulterior designs, a reserve which the mode of his correspondence, which was by post, seemed to authorise. Whilst waiting for the countess's answer, he busied himself in preparations for his hazardous journey. If the obstacles he had to surmount were great, he had powerful auxiliaries to aid him in surmounting them: in the first place, a courageous heart, proof to every trial; in the second, an intellect of superior order; and last, not least, a well-filled purse. When these

three are combined, they are all but omnipotent; for the power that chance, under the name of fortune, exercises over events, is much more limited than people are apt generally to imagine.

As he contemplated the employment of violence, it was necessary to procure a few of those bold determined fellows without creed or heart, habituated to despise custom and make light of law, and who were ready to expose their lives to hazard wherever the paltry lure of money was held out to them. Notwithstanding the boasted progress of the march of intellect, there is no state in Europe that does not harbour a great number of such dangerous subjects; and while the perversity of human nature remains so strong as it is, it is as hopeless to expect that society will ever be purged from their presence, as to expect that the earth will ever be cleared of every noxious animal and insect that infest it. It is not less, however, the duty of every government to be unsparing in their efforts to diminish an evil which it is impossible to eradicate; and yet, sorry are we to say it, in almost every country a conduct precisely opposed to this is observed.

It was thus that in the Lombardo-Venetian government the prohibition of a vast number of articles of manufacture, to the use of which the entire population had been long habituated, and of which no prohibition could induce them to deprive themselves, had generated a host of smugglers, who occupied the southern declivities of the Alps, from the western extremity of the Tyrol as far as the confines of the Vaudois, with almost military strictness. These modern freebooters, who are a brave and active set of men, are divided into distinct bands; all of them ready to assist each other, and led on by intelligent and experienced chiefs. Ever at open war with the customhouse officers, they not unfrequently exchange a shot with them, but more ordinarily they proceed by negociation; and whole convoys of prohibited goods pass freely on payment of a stipulated sum. This contraband commerce is far from inconsiderable; it employs annually a capital of several millions; and these speculations return such great profits, that there is hardly a town in which entrepots may not be found filled with the fabrics of England, of France, and Switzer-

land. In fact, the only party that is a loser in this way is the Austrian government, which is so very ill-advised, as to entertain at a vast expense a legion of officers employed in attempts to keep up a prohibition that exists only in name, whilst it might, were it content to limit its views to the exaction of moderate duties wisely imposed on the compound rates of the bulk and value of the articles imported, derive from them a large and steady revenue.

In fact, with all the attempted precautions, so little is the contraband trade watched over, or rather so habitually is it connived at, that the merchants engaged in it make hardly any mystery of their traffic. It was, therefore, no difficult matter for La Cesia to get access by means of Valville, who happened to have some business with his house, to one of those worthies. La Cesia was represented as a banker of Lyons who had some funds compromised by the partial failure of a manufacturer at St. Gall; the latter, it was pretended, had offered a large quantity of muslin and of calicoes at prime cost in liquidation of his debt; but these articles being a drug in the

market, in consequence of the crisis that commerce had been exposed to in both worlds, it was found impossible to effect sales on the spot without incurring an immense loss; whereas, by introducing them in an underhand way into Austro-Italy, it was not unreasonable to look for a considerable profit, that is to say, if the cost of insurance and of carriage were not too high.

The merchant of Como replied to these overtures, that circumstances were not favourable to such speculations—that the old inspector of customs, who had been blamed by government for his negligence, which perhaps was not very disinterested, had just been succeeded by a young fellow of great activity, whose vigilance had diffused a general uneasiness among all those who were concerned in smuggling transactions—that, in fact, so very little business that way had been effected for several weeks, that the premium of insurance was not even fixed. Under such circumstances, he advised La Cesia to direct his views to another part of the frontier. "It is alleged," said he, "that the issues of the Grisons are not so strictly watched as they used to be;

and as I am a little interested in that quarter, I have sent one of my principal agents thither—a fellow who has both pluck and arm: I'll tell you what he says of it as soon as he returns."

"I am pressed for time," replied the count, "and must adopt some resolution or other immediately; I should therefore like to examine the facilities you speak of in person, as well as the amount of risk that I must incur. Be then so good as to let me have a note of introduction to your confidential agent; I shall call on you when I come back, and then perhaps we may bargain together."

The note was accordingly written; and the very next morning La Cesia set out for the village of N. on the route of Coire. It was there that the chief of the smugglers in that quarter had taken up his temporary residence for the purpose of exploring the country.

In delivering his credentials, La Cesia was particularly struck by the distinguished manners of the man to whom they were addressed. He was a man in the vigour of his age, tall, and with well-knitted joints; his eye quick, his regard keen; and

it might be easily perceived from the ease and freedom of his step that he had been a soldier.

"The object of my journey," said the count to him politely, "is to receive precise information of the state of the frontier. I wish to know if the watch kept up is a strict one. Have we, for instance, if unprovided with passports, to quit the grand route, and to take to by-ways in order to pass the barriers? And if so compelled, must we go on foot, and how long? Are the customhouse officers fellows that you could treat with? And, lastly, if we were inclined to force a passage, would the attempt be accompanied with much risk?"

Antonio, which was the travelling name of the captain of the smugglers, replied, that he had been too short a time in the country to give a positive answer to all these inquiries; but that he reckoned, along with a couple of companions, on making a survey next day through the mountains, and that he should then see how the land lay.

"I shall go with you, if you have no objection," said La Cesia, who was delighted at the prospect of an excursion in company with an individual whose appearance bespoke a man of education and

of cultivated mind. Nor did his appearance belie him; for during the two days that they passed together, an intimacy, naturally springing out of similarity of character and of profession, did not fail to be established between them. When they were on their return to the village of N. the count, who was anxious to enter into yet stricter ties of connexion with a person whom he hoped to associate in his projects, expressed to his new friend the surprise he not unnaturally felt at finding him in a situation so inferior to what he had a right to expect from fortune; a situation in which the gains were precarious and scanty, the labour without intermission, and the danger without honour.

"I shall respond to the interest that you testify for my welfare," said Antonio, "by frankly confiding my history to your keeping. It is a very plain one, and would figure but poorly in the pages of a romance. I was born in the Valteline, and of consequence I am a Swiss by nation, although since the glorious congress of Vienna I have become a subject of Austria. My family is noble, and my relations have always served in the

troops of the canton that were in the pay of France. Such also was my destination; but my father, who was an officer in the Swiss guards, having been massacred on the famous 10th of August, my mother, out of hatred of the revolution by which she had suffered so much, made me enter as a cadet into the imperial regiment of Belgiososo. I made five campaigns with that corps; and in the course of the fifth, and last, I received a rather severe wound, which purchased me the cross of Maria Theresa, and the promise of a sub-lieutenant's commission. I was on the very eve of obtaining it when I somehow fell out with our aid-major. The fellow was a German, a soldier of fortune, whose natural rudeness degenerated when he was drunk to sheer brutality. He made a real German quarrel with me; and in the course of it indulged in terms so very offensive, that I had no way of silencing him but knocking him down. I was quite ready to give him every satisfaction, but he preferred a complaint, and had me cashiered. This rigorous chastisement of a fault, which the extreme provocation I had received rendered quite excusable, and the deprivation of a rank which I had acquired

by honourable service, and at the price of my blood, excited my indignation to the highest degree. I swore eternal hatred to the government of Austria, and instantly quitted the cantonments where we then lay, with a view to pass over to America and join the bands fighting under Bolivar, and follow the destiny of that second Washington of the new world. I was crossing over the Alps, in order to bid a last good-bye to my mother, when, clambering up St. Gothard, I accidentally met with one of my fellow-countrymen who was travelling for a commercial house. The persons who employed him carried on an extensive contraband traffic with Lombardy: he prevailed on me to go with him to Como; and there he introduced me to the merchant whose letter you brought with you, and he and I soon came to a mutual understanding. After taking the management of two or three hazardous expeditions, from which I extricated myself successfully, he confided to me the command of a squad of twenty fellows, mostly deserted soldiers, with which for these two years past I have scoured the frontiers of Milan and Piedmont. Far from repining at my lot, I find

it much more agreeable than the one I have left; and every day I see fresh reason for congratulating myself on the change. In the first place, I have no reason to fear injustice or violation of right here. If I have a good deal of labour to undergo—if I have some dangers to brave, at least I make war for my own interest and that of my allies, and not in order to serve the ends of a prince whom, from the moment that by a monstrous abuse of power he subjugated my country to his yoke, I have not ceased to detest. In a word, I am the commander of a set of brave, intelligent fellows, who are to a man devoted to my service."

"In fact," replied La Cesia, "I could not but observe during our excursion the eagerness of the men that accompanied you to get you out of that difficult place, in which we thought we should have to remain."

"They are all equally attached to me; nothing indeed but justice and firmness, with the exercise of a little kindness, is requisite to gain the affections of those that are dependent on us. My volunteers are as punctual in their service as

the troops of the line, and they have moreover a zeal——."

"You dispose of them as you please, of consequence.—If, for instance, you called on them to escort, say, instead of a few bales of merchandise, a few persons who had an interest in passing the frontier without being observed, it would be all the same to them?"

"Unquestionably—the risk is the same."

"And if one were to double the remuneration that they are in the habit of receiving for such expeditions?"

"Mr. Banker," replied Antonio with a smile, to this hint, "I have had a suspicion ever since we first met that you are not an ordinary merchant. Come, now, I'll wager that, instead of muslin and calicoes, the goods you wish to smuggle over the border in safety are persons that bear the mark of proscription on their foreheads."

"Mark of proscription," said the count, with some hesitation; "well, be it so—be it so. At all events, the principles you profess, your just cause of resentment against the Austrians, every thing must incline you to succour the victims of that

oppressive government, and to aid me in inflicting a merited chastisement on its most infamous agents."

"I ask no better," cried Antonio, with much heat—"I ask no better; and since it is so, I myself will conduct the expedition, and not a farthing of recompense will I accept for my service."

La Cesia was highly pleased by this declaration; but not wishing to enter into minute details until the moment of execution was come, he contented himself with thanking the chief of the smugglers, and with adding, that the enterprise, although hazardous in appearance, was in reality attended with very little danger.

"Danger," said Antonio carelessly, "we count little of. For myself, I am, I confess, beyond the age when peril is sought as pleasant in itself; but whether it be constitution or habit, I know not, but I am no more sparing of myself than I am of the rest; and, in fact, what is there so very terrible in advancing by a few minutes the fatal term, the arrival at that haven where, as the philosophers tell us, all is finished? It is, were it rightly taken, a service, not a punishment, to disembarrass an indi-

vidual of this sluggish and incommodious burden of life, to which we cling notwithstanding, yet without knowing wherefore. What is forbidden, what is really contrary to natural right, is to cause useless suffering to a sentient being, to treat man as if he were one of the lower animals. So, whenever I strike, I endeavour to make my strokes tell effectually—and I generally succeed pretty well—that is my principle."

"Principle!" said the count, shaking his head, "why, Antonio, with your principle, we should, in the name of humanity, put our fellows to the sword. However, your doctrine is convenient, and it is the chief one: nor is it unjust it should, since in this lower world every thing, if we except mathematical truths, is matter of doubt and uncertainty."

They separated after this conversation, which we have reported only to show to what a lamentable extent the deplorable system of pyrrhonism may vitiate even the purest and most intelligent minds.

The next day La Cesia, having accomplished his object, returned to Como. It was agreed

that Antonio should retain at his instant disposal six determined fellows ready to second his designs, whatever they happened to be. One hundred and fifty napoleons, the one-half payable in advance, and the remainder when the frontier was fairly passed, was the sum agreed on between them.

CHAPTER XV.

THE answer of the Countess Gradiska to the letter of La Cesia was not long in arriving. That friend, as active as she was sincere, was so anxious to gratify the wishes of him whom she called her brother, that she was able to inform him, after but a few days' research, that he might safely take up his abode at Mesnil; a country-seat between Chevreuse and Versailles, whose proprietor was then absent. This proprietor was an old chamberlain of Napoleon, who was at that time travelling abroad from political motives; and the steward of the house, who was an intelligent and a faithful man, had orders to receive the count, and to see to his safe keeping.*

* By one of those fatalities, against which no prudence can sufficiently provide, the chateau of Mesnil became an object of sus-

La Cesia only waited for this assurance, in order to commence the plan he had formed. The moment he received it, he went secretly to Blevio; and establishing himself in a little inn at the entrance of the village, he there sought for information touching the inmates of the Château Varèze. Their position remained unchanged; the marquis still a paralytic, never quitted his bed; and his daughter, whose health was extremely delicate, and who was then far advanced in her pregnancy, very seldom quitted the house, unless to go to church. On the approach of night the count crept out to reconnoitre secretly the environs of the mansion, of which he had been an inmate in times of greater happiness. As the wall of the garden was somewhat high, he got over by means of a ladder; and approaching the building quietly and cautiously, he measured by means of one of those long

picion to the police, in the interval of time that elapsed between the letter of the countess being written and the anticipated arrival of his friend. Happily she had notice of this circumstance, and she instantly sent one of her people to point out a secure place of refuge. That domestic, after vainly seeking for La Cesia on the Fontainbleau road, finished by finding him at "Our Lady of the Rock."

reeds like bamboos, that grow commonly in marshy grounds in Italy, the height of the window-sill of the first floor. He was beginning to try the power of resistance in the door, and to examine the strength of the bolt of the lock, when he saw a light glimmer in the apartment that was occupied by Thomasine, in that part of the palace which looked towards the precipitous hill in the rear, to which in that particular point it was very close. A sudden trembling seized his frame on finding himself so near to one whom he had so devotedly loved, and yielding to an almost involuntary movement, he clambered hastily by the steep footpath, that led up the hill to a kind of terrace, whence he could see whatever was passing in the chamber, the window of which was half open. Thomasine was seated near a table in the attitude of meditation; on a sudden she raised her eyes to heaven, and heaved a deep sigh, while such an expression of sweetness and of pious resignation at the same time beamed in her angel look, as to affect his heart in the most lively manner.

"Such," said he to himself, "was doubtless her look when she prayed for me in that very

place, and such was it when she recalled me to life. No, I will not, I cannot accumulate misery on that victim of filial piety." Resolved to renounce his guilty projects, he was about to remove from the house, when a picture that hung above the bed attracted his eye; and he recognised in it distinctly the odious features of Steinman, who had had his likeness drawn in Austrian uniform. At the sight of that countenance every revengeful feeling sprang up afresh in his wounded breast; in a transport of rage he ran down or rather darted through the brushwood, hurried across the garden, every thought drowned in his desire of revenge and of the means of accomplishing it.

As soon as day began to peep he returned to Como. On arriving there he wrote to Antonio to bring with all possible speed his men from Canobbia, a large village on the north shore of the lake, and immediately opposite to Blevio, where the smugglers had had for a long time an entrepot, and a number of confidants. As they required five or six days before they could reach the rendezvous, the count employed the time that

thus intervened in procuring a couple of rope-ladders, with clamps to secure them, and one of those light arm-chairs that are commonly used in Switzerland instead of sedans, for the purpose of transporting along the mountain-tracks women or men who are not able to bear the fatigue of riding on horseback. Valville was rather uneasy at these preparations, which announced some attempt at abduction. He sought most earnestly to turn the mind of his young friend from such an act, the consequences of which might be fatal to him; not by a representation of the dangers attending it, for he well knew that no consideration of danger would induce him to hold back for a moment; he preferred representing to him the miscalculation in the sum of his enjoyment, which he would not fail to find, even should every thing go on to his mind.

"I see," said he, "you are quite determined on recovering possession of her who has been so unjustly taken away from you. Unquestionably, a man has always a right to take back his own property; and what property more dear and precious than a charming woman, whose virtues

equal her beauty? But, unfortunately, those very virtues oppose an insurmountable obstacle to the happiness which you might otherwise enjoy with her. Then, she is not only married, but she will soon be a mother."

"And that," said La Cesia, with an accent of concentrated rage, "is precisely the reason why I have determined to carry her off."

"I don't understand you," replied Valville, fearing a fresh return of his madness.

"You do not understand me," rejoined La Cesia, in a more calm tone, "because you would submit the effects of a passion that is irresistible to the regulations of reason. Yes, it matters not at what price, I will be revenged. I will be revenged; and in a short time there shall not exist a trace of that monstrous alliance which has been the fruit of baseness and of perfidy."

These words, pronounced with an air of the utmost decision, took from Valville every hope of bringing him back to more moderate sentiments. He therefore made no reply; but he groaned in spirit when he thought of the sorrowful lot which

the inflexible spirit of the count was preparing for him.

Antonio, faithful to his engagements, was exact to the rendezvous pointed out to him, and La Cesia hastened to join him at Canobbia. It was there that they finally arranged the plan which appeared to them most likely to ensure the success of their enterprise. The count's servant, Carl, arrived the same day with the ladders and the arm-chair; and, every thing being ready, at night-fall the expedition, consisting of nine determined individuals, every one of them armed with pistols and poniards, set out in a fishing-boat for Blevio.

The night was dark; there was no moon; and they crept in consequence slowly along the coast, in order to catch the land-wind, when suddenly, on passing a small creek, a man who stood concealed under a wild fig-tree was heard to whistle. At that signal, a boat manned with six men, all of them armed with carabines, and rowed by four stout rowers, advanced rapidly to intercept their progress. When they came within hearing, the

commander of the boat cried aloud to the smugglers—

"Halt, in the name of the emperor and king, or else we shall fire into you."

La Cesia, who by the glimmer of twilight recognised the uniform of the custom-house, rose, and replying for the rest, said in a calm and firm tone—

"Gentlemen, this must be a mistake, which a very little examination will clear up; but in the meanwhile we must pay respect to authority, at all events. We shall therefore allow you to search us cheerfully, and our papers also."

The officers hearing these words of peace, and perceiving no arms in the hands of the speaker nor his companions, approached without distrust; while La Cesia informed Antonio and his friends of what he intended. When the two boats were but a foot or two apart, the smugglers leaped lightly on board the king's vessel, pistol in hand; and the count pressing his to the breast of the leader, cried to him in his turn—"Give up your arms, rascals, or you are all dead men." The attack, which was as unexpected as sudden, completely succeeded. Being attacked when they least

looked for it, and that when they were so closely crowded together, that it was impossible to use their carabines, they had no alternative but to allow themselves to be disarmed. This operation gone through, they were allowed to retire after La Cesia had taken from them three of their oars and their mast, leaving them but one oar; and thus rendering it impossible for them to pursue him.

This rencontre, thanks to the firmness and presence of mind displayed by the count, did not detain them but for a few minutes on their course to Blevio; but the wind dying away, and it being necessary in consequence to have recourse to their oars, it was one o'clock in the morning before the boat was able to reach the little harbour attached to the palace of Varèze. The lights by that time were extinguished; and no sound disturbed the dead silence that reigned around it, but the sound of the dying breeze, as with intermitted puffs it shook the leaves of the trees in the orchard, or the slender tops of the lofty cypresses. La Cesia cautiously landed with his band, and climbing over the wall—a low one—which served as an en-

closure to the garden, he conducted them to the shed where the billets of wood for the use of the family were piled up. On arriving there, every man took a couple of faggots and carried them to the wall of the house, arranging them in a pile under the window of the corridor. When they had done so, however, it was found to be still so high that a great many more would have been required to reach it, and to build them up might have wasted time, which was of all things precious; La Cesia therefore, impatient of such delay, mounted the heap of faggots along with the tallest of the smugglers, and raising himself on the shoulders of the latter, he succeeded in reaching the window. He then cut with his diamond pencil the pane that was opposite to the window-bolt, opened the window, and fixed the rope-ladder which he held in his hand. It was by means of the ladder that Antonio and his people got access to the interior of the house, where they lost not a moment's time in carrying to the garret the billets of wood they had brought from the shed, as well as a few pots of pitch which they had found in the stern sheets of the boat. These combusti-

bles were then lighted, and in a few minutes the frame-work of the roof, which was formed of larch-wood, was in a blaze; the flames began to burst from the sky-lights, and to creep along the roof, whilst a dense smoke spread itself through the whole of the palace. When they had accomplished this feat, they immediately ran down, crying out, fire! The alarmed servants crowded out; and as soon as they appeared in the corridor, they were told by La Cesia, in a tone of command, to go and assist the people employed in extinguishing the burning. Whilst they ran to and fro seeking water, the door of Thomasine's apartment opened; and forgetting her delicate state of health, she was running with headlong steps to the room occupied by her father, exclaiming as she advanced—"Oh! save my father!" when La Cesia stopped her progress.

"Fear nothing," said he, "saved he shall be; I'll answer for his safety with my life." The unexpected sound of his voice, the features of his well-known face dimly seen by the uncertain light of the burning mansion, served but to increase her terror; and her senses giving way to

her alarm, she fell fainting at his feet. To lift her up to place her in the arm-chair they had brought with them, and to hand her over to the two men whom he had retained with him in order to carry her out of the palace, whilst, faithful to his promise pledged to her, he made the old paralytic marquis be conveyed to the bathing-room, whose thick arched roof and isolated position secured it from danger; to do all this was the work of but a minute. The bearers of Thomasine conveyed her, senseless as she was, to the shore, without any one for a moment thinking of opposing the act: this was, in fact, what La Cesia had calculated on, when he thought of setting fire to the palace; whose destruction in that way, it should be observed, from its detached situation, was not like to be accompanied with danger to any other house in the village, at least without giving all due warning.

He had ably calculated that by appearing with his people at that critical minute as the auxiliaries of the household, they would be welcomed without distrust by those even who, in the event of an

open attack, would have been received by them as enemies. This was, besides, the only means of avoiding a contest; for he could not dissemble to himself that Thomasine, far from lending herself to his designs, would oppose to them such a resistance, that he would, in order to succeed, have to carry her off by undisguised force. When he and Antonio were planning their schemes at Canobbia, the latter proposed to take a barrel or two of powder with them, in order to blow up, as they were retiring, one of the wings of the castle; "and thus," said he, "while the confusion of the people round the castle is necessarily augmented by such an accident, we shall secure our retreat in a way that is worthy of old soldiers." But this mode of securing a retreat the count absolutely forbid. He had indeed a decided repugnance to the destruction of life in every shape; less, it must be observed, from any feelings of morality, than from a love natural to all minds of a higher stamp, that never fail to exhibit a lively impress of their celestial origin—a love of creating and of perfecting—which to such

minds bears more of the attributes of power and of genius than destruction or disarrangement.*

The count arrived at the shore at the moment when his men had placed Thomasine in the boat. She was then beginning to recover, and the count, who had not an instant to lose, immediately gave the signal to push off the boat; and already the oars were seized by the rowers for that purpose, when a man came running forward, panting for breath, and calling loudly on the boatmen to take him in, he leaped on board, without waiting for an answer to his demands. He carried a casket under his arm, and the end of a bag of money peeped forth from his pocket; his clothes were in a state of great disorder, and part of his hair was singed: it was Schelme. He had been sent by Steinman, who had just been apprised of his presence in the neighbourhood of Como, to procure some intelligence respecting La Cesia, and had only arrived at Blevio, with a view to make inquiries, the pre-

* This is a very just observation: the appetite for destroying is unquestionably an indication of mental weakness; and if any one be inclined to doubt this, we have only to remind them of the pastimes of their infancy.—*Editor.*

vious night. Being roused by the fire, he had entered into the palace of the marquis, not for the purpose of assisting, but of robbing him; and after plundering the scrutoire of its contents he had sought safety in the shed, where he thought he might securely lurk till morning. He was deceived, however, for the sparks from the burning house being blown towards the shed, set fire to its roof, and the straw blazed up in an instant. He escaped with some difficulty from this new danger, and ran down towards the lake, where the boat accidentally presenting itself to his view, he thought he should easily find shelter there. Scarce, however, had he got on board when the whole of the roof of the palace fell in; and a brilliant stream of light lighting up the whole horizon, he was recognised by Antonio as one of the heads of the police at Como, with whom he had had more than one quarrel.

"This is a valuable prize that fortune has thrown in our way," said he to La Cesia, in an under tone; "this fellow is the principal agent of the director-general, and he is the cunningest rascal that——"

"Wretch!" said La Cesia, interrupting Antonio, and seizing Schelme by the collar, "what do you want here? Where have you procured that bag of money? What are you about to do with it?"

"I saved it from the fire," replied Schelme. "I took it from the palace of the Marquis of Varèze; but it was only for the purpose of handing it over to his son-in-law, M. de Steinman."

The detested sound of Steinman was only wanting to rouse the count to fury. He raised the trembling ruffian in his vigorous hands without more explanation asked or given, and hurling him from him, launched him, as the English say, into eternity in an instant; for the weight of the coin with which his pockets were filled dragged him down to the bottom of the lake as rapidly as if he had had a millstone round his neck. The plunge into its bosom of the heavy and shrieking mass made the water splash up to a great height, as if the pure wave of the lake had been anxious to repel the indignity of being sullied by receiving it.

This act was attended with more important consequences than might have been anticipated

from it; for the death of Schelme was the cause why Steinman was not made acquainted, until several days after, with the details attending the abduction of his wife, which that active and intelligent agent would not have failed to transmit, as well as such indicia as would have enabled him to track the ravisher. In point of fact, the steward of the marquis wrote to him, by order of the latter, that very night; but he merely stated that no one had perished or been hurt; and that Madame de Steinman and Schelme not having made their appearance after the fire, it was concluded for certain that they had been both saved, and had proceeded to join Steinman. On receiving this piece of news, which was as vexatious as it was inexplicable, Steinman repaired in all haste to Blevio; but the marquis had not yet recovered from the alarm that the conflagration had caused, and, besides, he could give no information respecting Thomasine, for whose safety he now entertained the greatest fears. The people of the house knew no more of the matter than their master; but at length he learned from some of the neighbours who had assisted in extinguishing

the fire, that a pretty large boat filled with people had put off from the landing place at the moment the roof fell in, and by the light of the flames that then shot up, they were seen to steer in a northerly direction. In the midst of the researches which he made in every way and in every quarter, the director of the customs found a pocket-book, and brought it to Steinman, which contained some important papers. These seemingly proved that the ravisher of Thomasine had planned carrying her to Spain, the only country where the revolutionary party was triumphant; and it might be collected from some notes in the form of an itinerary, that the parties contemplated embarking at Genoa, as a great number of the insurgent Piedmontese officers had previously done, in order to escape the pursuit of the Sardinian government. Steinman had no difficulty in believing these documents, which did not in any respect violate probability; but they were a mere trick of La Cesia, who wished, for the purpose of gaining time, to mislead his enemy. With this view he had given the pocket-book in question to one of his confidential boatmen, with

directions to carry it to the director of the customs, and to inform him that he had picked it up on the shore of the lake. An agent was immediately sent forward to Genoa, and another to Nice, in the presumed route of the fugitives; and the police of Turin, between which and the police of Milan there existed the best possible understanding, were required to give every assistance and facility to their investigations. Steinman, in fact, had so little doubt of the success of his measures, that he did not deem it necessary to make inquiries in any other direction. It was not till after the return of his emissaries, who had scoured to no purpose the whole of Liguria, that he determined to have Switzerland examined, and thought of sending to the Austrian ambassador in France a description of Thomasine, of La Cesia, and Schelme, which last, he had not a doubt, had been content to betray him; for men who have no honesty in themselves are always ready to suspect others. The Austrian embassy were exceeding zealous in their researches, and they at length succeeded, in conjunction with the Parisian police, in obtaining some traces of the fugitives; and measures were

in consequence taken for their arrest, when the Countess Gradiska, who was informed of their intention by a spy whom she kept in the head-office, parried the blow, by sending express to La Cesia the note, whose delivery we mentioned in the first chapter of our history.

It now only remains, in terminating this first portion of our narrative, to describe the events of his journey up to that time.

On quitting Blevio, La Cesia made the boatman steer in a northerly direction. They had scarcely quitted the shore, when Thomasine recovered the use of her senses, and seeing herself surrounded by men whose countenances were calculated to inspire any thing but confidence, she displayed the strongest symptoms of alarm. The count perceiving her recovery and her distress, immediately approached the terrified lady, and addressing her in a respectful tone, requested her to calm her fears.

"Those persons, madam," said he, "whom you see around you are all my friends; and every one of them, as well as myself, is ready to peril his life in your defence."

"I have no fears for myself," said she, "in an accent of despair; but my dear father, what has become of him?"

"I pledged my word to look to his safety; and had I not been able to redeem my pledge, I should not have presented myself before you."

"I believe you," she answered in a somewhat calmer tone, "but whither, whither are you carrying me?"

"I grieve, Thomasine, that on that point I cannot satisfy you. But listen to me—you have a perfect controul over your feelings, I am too unhappily aware of that fact. Now exercise it in supporting yourself under your present circumstances. Do not allow yourself to sink under the remainder of the trials that fate has in reserve for you. Nothing can possibly save you from them; yet in accomplishing what I have irrevocably determined, I am far from wishing to aggravate your griefs. I might indeed complain," he added, uttering a deep sigh; "I might reproach, but I respect your virtue; and even did I not, your misfortunes would render you sacred in my eyes."

Thomasine was too fully aware of his inflexible character to hope that any entreaty would induce him to change his resolution, and directing to heaven a countenance in which resignation was depictured, she sat still and silent for the remainder of the voyage.

The passage of the lake took up not more than a couple of hours, for it is but narrow in that quarter. The party landed on the north shore at a wild spot behind the gardens of the Villa d'Este, and slowly climbing up the mountain through the brushwood that covers it, they reached at length the cottage of a wood-cutter, situated half way to the top. This man was in the confidence of the count, and with him they halted until the approach of the night, when they again began their march. The smugglers, who were powerful and active men, relieved one another from hour to hour in carrying Thomasine ; and so expeditious was their progress, that by next morning they reached the Swiss territory. When they arrived at the first town, the count cordially shook hands with Antonio, and adding a considerable present to the stipulated reward, bid farewell to him and his comrades.

CHAPTER XVI.

La Cesia, who was most anxious to remove to as great a distance, and as speedily as possible, from the pursuit which he had every reason to dread, the lady whom he had carried off, would have preferred proceeding to Paris, where he imagined he would necessarily be more safe than any where else, by the most direct road; but the Countess Gradiska, as the price of that asylum she had procured for him, had demanded that he should pass through Dauphiny. That province ever, since the commencement of the revolution, had sent forth the most zealous partisans of the democratic faction. It will be remembered that, in 1815, Grenoble, the capital town of the province, very narrowly escaped falling into the hands of the insurgents; and so very little progress had royalism made

subsequent to that year, that in the spring of 1821, the very year of which we are now treating, another violent attempt at insurrection had for some time placed the town in a state of siege.

The count was to remain at the mansion of one of the principal actors in the latter conspiracy, who dwelt at a country-seat a few leagues from the frontiers of Savoy, and there he was to collect such information respecting the state of the country as was deemed necessary by the central committee of Paris, previous to coming to any definitive resolution with respect to the period of commencing the grand rising that was then in contemplation.

The travellers, after passing without accident Mount Genevre, turned to the right, and gained by a cross-road very little frequented the ancient Benedictine abbey of Valsombre, which stands in one of those gorges that pierce into the western side of the Alps, and from which the road issues by a narrow defile into the lovely valley of Gresivaudan. Part of this ancient building was in ruins. During the reign of terror, the Band-noire had carried off most of the lead and iron work from the roof;

more recently, the house had been held by a succession of occupants, who found it convenient to pay neither interest nor capital of the purchase-money; and it ended by being sold, in 1810, for a mere song to Colonel St. Gratien. Some repairs had been made in the first few years that succeeded his purchase of it; and that officer, who had been wounded at the battle of Waterloo in the right leg, in such a way as, according to all appearance, would not fail to make him a sufferer for life, retired thither with his family a short time after that event.

Valsombre stands in the midst of woods, and in a wild part of the country. The access to it is difficult, and the entrance to the enclosure does not a little resemble at first sight that of the *Grande Chartreuse*, which is distant from it in a direct line only about four leagues. The pathway that leads to it, and which is shut in on the one side by a perpendicular rock, and on the other by the torrent, is defended by a massive gate, and the end of the wall that joins the porter's lodge is pierced with loop-holes. La Cesia having knocked for admission, was answered by a hoarse and stern voice—

"Who comes? no one can enter here. The colonel is sick, and can see no one but his physician."

In answer to this announcement La Cesia clapped his hands twice, and exclaimed, "The eagles pass every where." On this countersign of the conspiracy being given the barrier was opened, and the porter, an old soldier with grisly mustachios, presenting his firelock as if he had been on guard, saluted the party with a "Welcome, welcome, my comrades!"

When they had got within the gate he whistled to give notice to the people of the house.

An avenue of old lopped yews led them to the apartments formerly set apart for visitors, but which was now the only habitable part of the ancient monastery, and the colonel perceiving the approach of La Cesia from one of the parlour windows, came forth limping to meet him; and when he mentioned his name "Countess Gradiska," said he, "informed us of your intention to visit us, but I was not aware that you were accompanied by a lady. I shall call my wife, and she

will offer to her the honours of our hermitage as she best can."

Colonel St. Gratien was an officer of great distinction. He entered the army as a volunteer in 1792, and had attained the rank he held in the army solely by his merit. It is probable, at the same time, that he would not have risen so rapidly had it not been that, by a fortunate accident, Bonaparte on one important occasion happened to be an eye-witness of his exploits. The emperor was struck by the correctness with which he manœuvred, and his imperturbable coolness in the midst of a murderous fire; and on examining into his principles and opinions, he was informed that St. Gratien was a stranger to politics, that his only study was that of his own business, and that he entertained an admiration that verged on enthusiasm for the military talents of his chief; and lastly, that he was a man of unbounded devotedness to his general, but by no means distinguished for superiority of understanding. It was by such men that Napoleon loved to see himself surrounded: he determined, in consequence, to at-

tach St. Gratien to his person, and he was on the point of nominating him one of his orderlies, when an incident, somewhat singular, made him change his mind.

We have already said that Colonel St. Gratien was married. In the spring of 1800, a short time after the assembling of that army of reserve which, by the single victory of Marengo, conquered the whole of Italy, the company of chasseurs of which he was captain happened to quarter for several weeks at Dijon. St. Gratien was tall and well made, and his features agreeable; he captivated the daughter of his host, a young girl possessed of more vivacity than beauty, but of an irreproachable character, and respectable family; she had, moreover, a dowry of two thousand crowns. The captain of chasseurs, whose only fortune was his sword, thought this was a match by no means despicable; he married her, and he never had occasion to repent of doing so. On quitting his wife for the army he left her at her father's house; and she was still dwelling there in 1804, content with her situation, and even proud of the advancement of her husband, who

had recently been promoted to the rank of major, when the accession of Napoleon to the throne brought with it a swarm of titles; and she heard with mingled surprise and anger that one of her cousins, whose only advantage over her was the possession of a fine face, but whose husband was very high in the confidence of the prince, had just been nominated a lady in waiting to the empress.

A strong desire immediately seized the mind of Madame St. Gratien to occupy a place at court also: envy and ambition have often troubled more enlightened heads. Besides, the lady was one of those who never doubt of their success in any thing on which they fix their wishes, a temperament which is the source of much enjoyment, although it exposes its owner to many disappointments. Nor did she fail to represent to herself the impossibility of the emperor's refusing the request of the wife of an officer whose merit he personally knew. Filled with these hopes she set out for Paris, where her husband was at that time on leave, solicited an audience, obtained it, and preferred her suit in the form of a petition. But Napoleon, it is well known, prided himself on the

formation of a brilliant court. With him beauty in women was the first requisite for admission; and the only exception was a great name. Now poor Madame St. Gratien had been equally ill-treated by nature and fortune in both those respects, and her chances of success were therefore the smallest possible. Without being exactly ugly, she had an insignificant ill-formed figure; her walk was awkward, and her manners vulgar. She was refused, and refused without ceremony, and with disdainful rudeness; a manner which was, by-the-bye, more disagreeable in France, a nation renowned for gallantry all over the world, than elsewhere, and one which the women were never able to pardon in Napoleon.

Confounded and irritated at her reception, Madame St. Gratien complained most bitterly to her husband; who, though he blamed the inconsiderate step she had taken, could not help participating in her discontent, especially when he learned that the vacant situation had been bestowed on the Countess of * * *, whose only recommendation was a name that had figured in former histories.

"It is strange," he exclaimed loudly, "that the head of a government which owes its very existence to the revolution, should thus heap favour on the inveterate enemies of liberty, to the prejudice of the defenders of his country." His complaints were so much the more readily listened to, that in the circle of the principal crown officers, in the senate, in the legislative body, and even in the court, men saw with marked uneasiness the inclination of the emperor for the institutions, and, in consequence, for the men of the ancient *regime*.

It is even asserted that one of the generals most devoted to his person, Marshal Lannes, made in the name of his colleagues some pretty strong representations to the emperor on this subject. The answer to Lannes' remonstrance was, that the system was necessary to his line of policy, because it exhibited to strangers of all parties the spectacle of a perfect union surrounding the throne, which his enemies represented as tottering and unstable; but he did not use arguments merely to appease such of the malcontents as were possessed of formidable influence. Knowing by ex-

perience how greedy the most zealous champions of equality were of distinctions and titles, he was profuse in bestowing them. At the same time the spoils of vanquished nations furnished him with those irresistible arguments, as the most popular of our modern dramatists * terms them, by means of which he easily disarmed opposition and vanquished resistance.

St. Gratien was one of those who experienced the effects of this calculated generosity: the emperor sent him by one of his secretaries an order for sixty thousand francs on the privy purse, with a promise that he should be very speedily raised to the dignity of baron. Madame St. Gratien was present when the message was delivered, and to this part of it she deigned to answer with a smile of satisfaction, although she could not help exclaiming—

"So, I shall be a baroness, then! Well, that is something, certainly; but why not a duchess, and a lady in waiting, like my cousin? We are equals in every thing else, with all respect for the imperial family be it spoken."

* Beaumarchais.

"Madam," said the secretary, with an air of importance, "there is nothing that an officer so distinguished as your husband may not expect from the goodness of his majesty."

The colonel received the order with all gratitude; protested his entire devotion for the emperor; swore his fidelity should be eternal, and kept his word. He was prudent enough at the same time to vest the money thus put into his hands in good securities; and it was with this sum that he purchased the demesne of Valsombre, an acquisition which he most especially preferred on account of its proximity to the village of St. Gratien, where he was born, and from which he had seen fit to assume his title.

Fidelity to political oaths was at one time so common a virtue in France, that it possessed no more value than does gold in Eldorado; but since the revolution it has become more rare, and consequently it has risen in price. St. Gratien possessed that fidelity and firmness of character in an eminent degree which constitutes a loyal subject; but he fell into a culpable error, and failed in his duty as a citizen, by obstinately persisting

after he had resigned all title to the dignity, in recognising Napoleon as his legitimate sovereign. He was one of the first to join him on his return from Elba; and when the grand plans of his master were irretrievably ruined at Waterloo, he scorned to yield to fortune, or for a moment to give his affections to those princes who brought back that peace which had so long been exiled, and of which France had so pressing need. Not only did he not do so, but, in his anger, he confounded them with the foreigners against whom he had been so long contending; and blinded by his prejudices, he conceived that such sentiments as these were the offspring of the purest patriotism, although at the bottom, that which affected him most deeply was to see all those brilliant prospects his ambition had held out to him for ever vanish by the change of dynasty.

From 1815, St. Gratien had laboured with indefatigable activity to overturn the monarchy of the Bourbons; but as he laboured circumspectly, and with that cunning which ordinarily characterises the people of his native province, he had

hitherto carefully contrived to avoid compromising his safety, even while taking an important part in all the various plots that were almost uninterruptedly hatching in that part of the kingdom.

When La Cesia arrived at Valsombre there happened to be there an agent of the central committee of Paris, who had arrived some days before, charged with the delicate commission of re-establishing harmony among the chiefs of the conspiracy, which had been sadly broken; for though all of them had the same end in view, they were by no means agreed in regard to the mode of attaining it. St. Gratien presented La Cesia to this gentleman, stating at the same time that he was in the intimate confidence of the Countess Gradiska.

"Lady Gradiska!" replied Montagny, which was the travelling name that the ex-conventionalist had assumed; "ah, that is a woman above her sex; one who recalls to my memory by her courage as well as by the extent of her understanding the illustrious Roland! The checks that the sacred cause of liberty has received during

these latter days have so little abated her constancy, that at our assemblies it is ever she who raises our sunken spirits."

"Add," said St. Gratien, "add also, I beg of you, how nobly and generously her conduct contrasts with the miserable selfishness of the wealthy partners of our association. Is it not most revolting that people rolling in riches, who owe every farthing of their fortunes to the emperor, should care so little about the re-establishment of his family, while we poor devils in the country, who never enjoyed as they have done, enormous gifts and large pensions, do not hesitate to sacrifice our all? Here, I for my own share, have laid out five thousand francs during the last three months in the purchase of powder and lead, which has been brought to me from Savoy over the mountains; and had it not been for the remittance that you brought me from the countess I should not have been able to continue the expenditure that is absolutely necessary for the success of the enterprise."

La Cesia interrupted the colonel by asking for some positive information respecting the forces

which the party could raise in the district of Grenoble.

" You shall have them—you shall have them," said St. Gratien; " the accounts are all ready, and I doubt not the committee will be well satisfied with them; but let us begin our conferences after dinner," added he, conducting his guests into the dining-room.

Madame St. Gratien retired from the table when the dessert was served to rejoin Thomasine, who, fatigued with her journey, had requested permission to remain in her room.

After dinner the conversation reverted to the topic the three friends had been discussing.

" I am quite satisfied," said Montagny, " that the public spirit of the province, notwithstanding the indifferent success of our last attempt, is excellent; the whole of our fellows are ready for a start the moment the signal is given."

" I am of the same opinion as you are," said St. Gratien, " but what is the use of those popular movements? They are a mere blaze of straw ending in smoke. Every thing now-a-days depends on the military. Give me a battalion of

five hundred stout, well disciplined fellows, and I'll keep quiet a town of twenty thousand inhabitants. People talk of public opinion, of the will of the nation:—a parcel of fudge! get the bayonets, and then you may laugh at all the rest. The people you say have given in their resignation; it is true, but then the army has taken their place."

"They cannot keep their place," replied Montagny sharply: "principles are opposed to them: no society can possibly exist in which the soldiery are not essentially obedient to the laws."

"Obey!" said St. Gratien, with a smile of contempt, "and whom, forsooth—the rabble? Let us alone; when we are once possessed of power we'll soon set them trotting."

The term rabble stirred up the anger of the demagogue. "What do you mean," said he, "with your disdainful airs? and whom do you call rabble? are they of a different species from yourself, pray? is not your father one of that same rabble? I never heard of the hereditary nobility of your good family, colonel. Sir, this rabble you talk about constitutes the entire of the nation,

with the exception of the military, that is, with the exception of that part of the nation whose intellect is least comprehensive, and whose patriotism is least pure."

"You insult the army," cried St. Gratien, in a rage, and while he spoke he rose from the table and waved his hand menacingly; but Montagny was not a man to be so intimidated. He was small in stature, and sickly in complexion, already advanced in years, and still more broken down by care than by old age; but his air of determination, and his sparkling eyes, announced a man, the energy of whose mind more than compensated for the feebleness of his body.

"Do you think," said he, with a determined voice, and fiercely regarding his adversary, "to alarm me, because you know how to handle a sword, or fire a pistol? Know I have been habituated to danger as well as you, and for as long a period. I have been devoted to the revolutionary cause from its earliest commencement, and I have daily exposed for now thirty years my liberty and my life in its behalf. I have been persecuted and proscribed by tyrants, hunted after by the minions

of police under the government of the emperor and under the government of the Bourbons. With nothing in prospect for years but dungeons, the guillotine, or a ball, a thousand times have I envied the lot of those who, by their station in society, had no fears but the muskets and cannon of the enemy. But a truce to these irritating discussions, colonel, yield yourself to evidence. So true is it that all power emanates from the people, that notwithstanding all your artillery, your great Bonaparte fell to the ground when the people no longer supported him."

"He only fell," replied St. Gratien indignantly, "because he was basely betrayed."

La Cesia now interfered to re-establish a good understanding between the two contending parties, who had so strong an interest in remaining united, and represented to them, that while labouring for the common good by the destruction of the existing government, it was not reasonable to quarrel, beforehand, about what they should do in the event of being successful.—"Your quarrel, gentlemen," said he smiling, "is like the old story of the bear's skin. Recollect the hunt is not yet

done, and that if you do not come to an understanding one with another, it never may."

Every one is aware that an argument presented to a Frenchman in the shape of a piece of pleasantry acquires a sort of calming and sedative virtue, which is wonderfully efficient in appeasing a quarrel. In fact the two conspirators were softening down in friendship again, when the old sergeant, who filled at Valsombre the functions of steward, entered the room, and informed the colonel that one without wished to see him. He immediately left his guests, and in a short time returned with a mercantile traveller, whom he introduced to the company as M. Mancin, a jolly fellow, who traded very extensively in France, and also abroad.

"And a rough job we have," replied Mancin, depositing his cloak, which was dripping with the rain, on one of the chairs, "in such weather as the present. However, when business goes smoothly, we must even console ourselves the best way we can."

In saying this, he drew from his pocket a pattern-book, covered with black leather, and filled

with a great number of patterns of various stuffs, —" I have here," said he, " some nice bargains; will you purchase, gentlemen?"

" Come, truce to your fun," replied St. Gratien; " let us have the correspondence."

The patterns, which were but slightly attached to the leaves of the pocket-book, having been raised up, a hair-pencil, dipped in a chemical composition, was passed over the paper that they covered, and the sympathetic writing with which it was filled became visible.

" Read," said Mancin, when this operation was finished, " here is a copy of a report which the committee of the garrison at Metz has transmitted by orders of the central committee. I am charged to communicate it to you as well as to our friends in Grenoble, in order to give if possible some degree of concert to our labours. I must also let you know that I have just arrived from Munich. I had a commission to Prince Eugene: he was requested to put himself at the head of the insurrectionists, and I had an address for him signed by a great number of officers that had served under his command. I was, moreover, au-

thorised to promise that the castle of Strasburg would declare for him as soon as his arrival at Kehl was known. But for all this, I unfortunately did not succeed in my expedition. The viceroy, though flattered by the marks of esteem displayed towards him by his companions in arms, excuses himself from complying with their desires by his dependence on the king his father-in-law; and besides, his health is feeble, and he has a number of infirmities that have rendered him an old man before his time. All that remains for us now is to write to Sweden."

"Eugene Beauharnais," said Montagny, "would for our purpose be preferable to all others. He is an honourable man, and of a high character for moderation; and besides, his intellect is by no means very bright, nor are his passions strong. If then a general must of necessity head the movement, it is such as he, who offers the surest guarantees to civil and popular power."

"For me," said St. Gratien, "'tis enough to know that he is beloved and esteemed by the soldiery, and that he is the adopted son of Napo-

leon. He is unquestionably the best military tutor that we could give to the King of Rome."

"Before any thing else," observed the stranger that wore the disguise of a traveller, "we ought to resolve that the generalissimo, whoever he may be, shall decide on no important business, in respect of promotion at least, without the advice of a permanent council of war. The army has no intention of submitting again to that arbitrary system that weighed it down under the imperial *regime*, when ranks and honours and favours of every kind were but too frequently granted to intriguers and flatterers. I myself know, that to have served under General Moreau was to have a black cross at one's name."

"Let us begin," said St. Gratien, "as the count judiciously observed, by getting possession of power. Matters will afterwards arrange themselves to general satisfaction. But it gets late, and you reckon on starting to-morrow morning, I suppose. I must therefore show you the curiosities of Valsombre to-night."

CHAPTER XVII.

St. Gratien, preceded by the porter with a lantern (it was then nine o'clock), conducted his guests into a large gothic hall, which is still termed the library of the monastery. The benedictines of Valsombre, who were renowned throughout the world for their laborious researches, had amassed an immense number of precious manuscripts in a handsome case, not unworthy of the magnificent collection it contained. But the Vandals of the reign of terror had sold the books by weight, destroyed the parchments, burnt the cases and the splendid wooden-work, and had left nothing whole but the frame of the edifice, which, though light, was too solid for their attacks. The building had for a long time served as

a granary, until the arrival of the new proprietor converted it into an armoury.

The colonel had a taste or rather a mania for collecting arms and armour of all kinds. Every varied means of destruction, which man in his ingenious malevolence has invented for the purpose of inflicting wounds and death on his fellows, possessed in the eyes of St. Gratien a peculiar charm; and yet he was a feeling-hearted man, and compassionate withal: but the human mind is full of contradictions.

During his various campaigns he had omitted no opportunity of gratifying his inclination for curious or rare arms; and his collection was already considerable, when the invasion of Switzerland, under the directory, procured for him what he deemed a real treasure.

The principal town of one of the petty cantons was carried by storm by the troops that he commanded; and after the affair was over, there was found in the town-house, amongst trophies of Helvetian glory, that had been given up to pillage, a dozen of figures moving by springs, and armed cap-a-pie, such as are yet to be seen in the arsenal

at Soleure. St. Gratien made prisoners of war, without opposition from any one, of those representatives of the companions of William Ide, loaded his baggage-waggon with them, and now by a strange change of fortune they figured in the ancient library of a monastery. Two of these warriors, which were of colossal height, were placed on each side of the door, which they appeared to guard; the remainder were disposed in two lines under the arched windows, each holding a lance in the one hand and a buckler in the other. The shields were without blazoning; but on them the guests might read the name of some one or other of the combats in which the colonel had suffered in his body or limbs; and as a further trophy of his valour, from the vault of the room hung the scarlet and gold scarf of an English officer, whom he had slain with his own hand at the battle of Hondschoote.

When St. Gratien had arrived at the middle of the hall, and looked round on these irresistible testimonies of his prowess with a look of much satisfaction—"Gentlemen," said he, "I have lost my lands in Poland and Westphalia, but I

console myself, when I think on the circumstance, that if I have them not, I yet fought well for them. But," added he, addressing La Cesia, whose eyes were fixed on a bust of the king placed in a niche that had formerly held the figure of St. Benedict, and above which were written in large characters the words

LONG LIVE THE KING!

"I perceive that you are surprised to see the place of honour in my house thus occupied. I shall tell you, first of all, that I owe this homage to the monarch, who on his return to France condescended to give me the cross of St. Louis, which unquestionably I should not have asked from him. But to speak seriously, these demonstrations of royalism are the assured means of destroying the suspicions that might otherwise be entertained against us. The sub-prefect in his tour the other day came to Valsombre, probably with the design of sounding my disposition, and he was so highly edified by the decoration of this hall, that he is to report to the prefect that I am a man of the soundest opinions possible."

" In revolutions," said La Cesia, " dissimulation is allowable, at least so we of the south think, in Spain as well as in Italy."

" You are perfectly in the right," said St. Gratien; " but, at the same time, it is much more agreeable to show ourselves as we really are."

As he pronounced these words he made a sign to the porter, and the latter pressing his foot forcibly on one of the planks of the floor, released the spring of a piece of mechanism somewhat complicated. The two sentinels brought their lances to the rest; and from a recess that was formed on the top of the niche, there came forth an eagle which struck off the crown that was on the head of the king; and lastly, in order to complete the scene, the shield with its tressure of *fleur-de-lis* that was above the " Long live the King" dropped, and displayed the additional words " of Rome."

" These," cried the colonel with a loud voice and a menacing gesture, " these are my genuine sentiments—Long live the King of Rome, and death to the coalitionists! Such are the sentiments of all our companions in arms."

"Speak for yourself, colonel," replied the republican officer drily, "we all wish for a change, but we are by no means all agreed in regard to the new form of government to be established."

"We ought to understand one another then," said St. Gratien: then turning to La Cesia, who looked with an eye of contempt on this mummery, "my soldiers are more formidable fellows than you perhaps imagine, count." So saying, he took off the shield of one of the figures, and showed the whole of the interior filled with bundles of cartridges.

"Here are five hundred rounds: that makes in all six thousand balls for the use of such royalists as may dare to present themselves to us; but I hardly think that many will do so."

Montagny here joined in the conversation.

"You cannot conceive, count," said he, addressing La Cesia, "what an astonishing effect this mass of ammunition, and the whole of this apparatus, which appears to you so childish, produce on the simple inhabitants of our fields. At our last meeting, when they saw the eagle, the

whole *venté* were filled with enthusiasm, and called for arms and the signal to fall on." *

"They shall soon obtain that satisfaction," said St. Gratien, in an animated tone, as he walked out of the room, and conducted his guests to the sleeping apartments that were destined for them.

The inmates had retired for about three quarters of an hour; and La Cesia had not yet lain down on his bed when he heard a low and cautious tap at the door of his room. It was Montagny, who requested a private conversation with him.

"You are called," said he, after he had entered and closed the door, "both by the distinguished rank which you occupy among the Italian patriots as well as by your talents and your connexions, to act an important part in this European conspiracy; and it is therefore most necessary you should know exactly the state of the country which is at present the principal focus of it. But I must

* It is said that the term *venté*, which was borrowed from the Carbonari, is now adopted by conspirators in all countries, to designate those meetings that are held for the purpose of planning the overturn of their respective governments.

first of all let you know that you would form a very unsound judgment were you to listen to the assertions of Colonel St. Gratien. He talks as if, when we were once rid of the yoke of the Bourbons, we should be again placed under the still heavier yoke of the military. This is indeed his wish, and the wish of a great number of officers; but this the nation will not permit; and we shall see to that carefully. In a few words, here is the condition of France. The priests and the nobles have lost their influence for ever; the revolution has done justice upon them, at all events. At present all the power and all the strength are in the hands of the middle classes, because in their hands are deposited both the intelligence and capital of the state. As to the common people of the towns, who are ignorant and rude, the necessity of daily labour will eternally keep them in dependance, as much as it does the poor peasants, who are bent down to the earth, and who rank in the social order of things no higher than the serfs from whom they spring. Cruel experience has shown the vice of the system of equality when it goes down to the lowest classes. After,

therefore, we have pulled down the great, it is our wish to rule over the small."

"I understand," said the count, with a slight smile of irony; "in order to ensure your own freedom, you intend to constitute yourselves masters of all the rest."

"If we wish to be masters," replied the revolutionist warmly, "it is for the general good that we wish to be so."

"It is even thus," replied La Cesia, "that crowned despots talk. They are the fathers of their people, and have no wish but for the good of their children. But go on: can you tell me what are your means of overturning the state, and what form of government you purpose to establish for the maintenance of your trading aristocracy?"

"Our means are immense, and our success is certain. In the first place, all the separate corps of the army, to begin with the guards, for instance, are with us."

"Are you quite sure of that? We were told exactly the same story in Piedmont; and the event proved that the military establishment of the king thought more of their oaths than of the

cause of the nation. And among the French, the facility with which your government suppressed the grand conspiracy of the month of August last year, indicates a disposition somewhat similar in your guards also."

"The measures of that period were ill taken; they will be better looked to this time. We are specially occupied in gaining over the inferior officers, who being in contact with the soldiers, exercise an exclusive influence over them. The school of Saumur, where they are assembled in great numbers, affords us great facilities; and were I to show you our correspondence, you would see that we have only to give the word, and the tricoloured flag will be hoisted on the turrets of that castle, which by its position on the Loire is one of great importance.* But it is much better the movement should be simultaneous; and when in every garrison the tricoloured cockade shall at one and the same instant take the place of the white, the disheartened and disunited royalists will

* In fact, a dangerous conspiracy in the school of Saumur was discovered at the very moment it was about to burst forth, on the 23rd of December of that very year 1821.

make no more resistance than they did on the famous 20th of March. But although the success of the insurrection is certain, it is not the less necessary to look to its consequences. Public opinion, I regret to confess it, is by no means so unanimous as it ought to be in respect of principles. The mixed forms of constitutional monarchies have seduced a multitude of timid and low minds. Even among those who despise the theory of legitimacy, there are enow of pusillanimous souls who would prefer that species of accommodation to a plain absolute republic, the only government that nature and reason sanction. They appeal for proof of their doctrines to the example of Great Britain, whose power and riches so dazzle all eyes; nor will they see that it owes its astonishing prosperity to the republican part of its institutions, and that its prosperity would have been much greater and more speedily attained had its progress not been trammelled by royalty. But no; either from motives of interest or from sheer folly, people will go on crying up, as a sublime conception, the hereditary peerage, that point at which all ambitious men aim, that sweet sine-

cure for all that are invested with it, and proclaiming the existence of two chambers as quite indispensable for cementing the difficult alliance between order and liberty! Although, however, such wretched sophists may have their dupes, they will not shake the political creed of honest and enlightened men. We, the patriots of eighty-nine and the republicans of ninety-three—we, who have shown our contempt alike for the greedy noblesse of the court of the Bourbons, and the vulgar parasites of the more sumptuous banquet of Napoleon, we shall repel with all our energy and power such insidious inventions of cupidity and tyranny."

"These sentiments," said the count, with an air of approval, "are worthy of a free and lofty spirit; but in this corrupted age, the party of the disinterested is but a small one."

"Boldness and strength of character," replied Montagny, who grew gradually animated as he proceeded, "supply the want of numbers; and it is from that cause that the minority have in all ages governed the world. Only call to mind the convention! How despotically did it reign over France, who yet held it in abhorrence! It

would have reigned yet had it not been infected with that weakness which, under the name of moderation, destroyed it. We, who have attained to power after so many tribulations and so much labour, will not fall into a similar error. Rigour inexorable shall be our guarantee for the submission of others. Kings may seek for the love of their subjects, their acts stand in need of it, but the heads of a republican government !—they ought to be as inflexible as the laws which they administer, and of which fear is the only attribute. Nothing is required to instil this fear into soldiers, as well as citizens, but strength of resolution. When I was deputy of the people with the army of the Sambre and Meuse, all that I had to do, in order to make both brave men and brave officers humble, was to hold up to their eyes the figure of the guillotine that was graven on my signet-ring."

" Our plan," he went on, " is completely arranged. Republican officers are appointed to head the several bands of the insurgents. We shall begin by displacing the royalists; but our process of depuration will not stop there, it will extend to the Bonapartists also. Whoever is

willing that any one man should lord it over the rest, be his name Louis, be it Napoleon, is unworthy to have the command of Frenchmen. St. Gratien himself, whatever be the services he has rendered to the cause, if he persist in his fanatical and servile attachment to the imperial dynasty, shall remain at Valsombre, and employ his time in manœuvring his puppets. But Marcin, who is an old aide-de-camp of Moreau, and a man of tried patriotism, shall be chief of the guard of government."

"You have not yet told me what form of government you intended to adopt."

"After a great many discussions, the supreme secret junta have determined to reject all constitutions that experience has not sanctioned: and we have at length fixed on adopting the fundamental institutions of that celebrated republic to which they assured no less than twelve centuries of glorious existence. We shall have, then, as the people of Venice had, a grand council, which will deliberate with closed doors; an executive committee of ten, and three censors of state, who will have the power of life and death. We shall thus

combine mystery and terror, the grand elements of human government in all ages and in all countries."

"I am not by any means certain," replied La Cesia, "that the French character would bear so harsh a system. At any rate your plans appear to me to be defective in their foundation. Where are you to procure in France the materials that gave power and life to the republics of Italy? Do you not know that the Venetian nobles, and the same observation holds true of the Genoese nobles, powerful in their wealth and illustrious in their traditions, paid for the supreme power with which they were invested by their fortunes and by their personal liberty? that they were ever ready to defend the state which they governed, and that too at their own expense? Take my word for it, your manufacturers will not easily be induced to make such a fool's bargain. Consult history, sir, and you will there find that the patrician order alone, the hereditary nobility, has ever been found capable of such elevation of mind. In a democracy civil virtues are rare and individual; while in an aristocracy well constituted the general

feeling of the whole body silences all selfish feelings, and patriotic devotion is converted into a point of honour."

"You are a noble, count," said Montagny, with one of those derisive smiles that never fail to accompany that kind of argument which the schoolmen term the *ad hominem*, and which can at all times be so conveniently substituted for logical reasoning.

"I am so," replied La Cesia, with dignity; "and I have assumed as my device the maxim of one of your writers on that point—NOBILITY IMPOSES OBLIGATIONS.

"But to return to your projects. Do you think that it would be prudent to attempt a revolution in France at a moment when all the rest of Europe is still under the yoke? Is it not evident that, at the first news of the insurrection, the sovereigns around would in their alarm unite their forces for the purpose of establishing among you what they call order? And how, in your disunited state, could you resist them? Trust me, every thing is to be hoped from a little delay; every day brings new proselytes to our cause. Even in the here-

ditary domains of Austria, which despotism has hitherto looked on as her unapproachable stronghold, in Moravia and in Hungaria the peasants are rising against their lords, and claiming their natural rights. In the north of Germany, in the mean time, that classic land of enthusiasm and secret societies, there is now springing up, and every moment increasing in power and numbers, an association that will soon become formidable—I mean the *Arminia*. That society coming forth under the auspicious name of the avenging hero of Germany, and founded on the Tugen-bund of the universities, has even now pushed its affiliated branches into the heart of Poland and Lithuania. It is upon those noble and unfortunate Sarmatians who have lost their independence, but have never been debased, that the friends of freedom henceforth found their dearest hopes. They exercise, in fact, over their conquerors the Russians the influence of superior civilisation and intelligence; an influence which is irresistible when aided by conformity of language and manners. It is from this influence that, in the extreme east of Asia, the Mantchou Tartars

have become the subjects of those Chinese whom they conquered. The grand work of Russian regeneration is more advanced than is generally imagined. The secret societies reckon among their members all the select bands of the army; and the movements that have been manifested in one of the regiments of the guards, though premature, is a sure indication of this. The progress of the general conspiracy would have been much more rapid had it not been for the attachment of the troops to the person of Alexander, whose humanity and generous sentiments do indeed merit every attachment and respect. But his health is completely broken, and his end is fast approaching. He dies without children, and his mighty inheritance will doubtless be contested. Now every thing has been prepared for the subversion of the throne of the Muscovite autocrats by a military insurrection, as soon as the contest is fairly begun. The consequence of such an event will be immensely important; for it is in such a case only that the government can enjoy its independence and consolidate its liberty in security."

Montagny, who had heard the count with the impatience natural to a Frenchman, here inter-

rupted his further harangue. "Your reasonings," said he, "are not without plausibility; but we are the slaves of circumstances, and if we neglect our opportunity the chances may turn against us. Louis XVIII. is dying down daily. He is playing the part of a king as long as he can, and dissembling his weakness and keeping up his ordinary habits; but nature betrays him. He has often been seen returning from his drive with his head resting on his breast, and plunged in a lethargic sleep. Moreover, the reports of the interior of the palace inform us that his prodigious memory is gradually growing feeble. He is no longer capable now, as he once was, to announce at once the day of the week corresponding to an immense number of events occurring in a great number of years. His doctors say he has the gout, and that for two years past there have been symptoms of paralysis in the lower limbs, but that now it has a tendency to the head, and cannot be relied on for a moment."

"You wish to be ready for the event?"

"We wish to anticipate it. We shall make a much better bargain of it with a feeble and dying king, than with a prince full of vigour and health

who is to succeed him. If we let him be installed quietly on the throne of his ancestors, he will probably maintain himself there; he will promise to observe the new institutions, the charter, forsooth, of which France is so proud; he will be credited; his honour is above suspicion, and his affability of manners will gain all hearts. But that is not all. The fatality that pursues us does not leave us even the chances of futurity, for there can be no doubt that his son will pursue the same course. In fact, instead of licentiousness of manners and the disorders common to courts, the whole of the family gives one uniform example: princes and princesses are models of virtue and beneficence. You cannot imagine what mischief this produces, especially in the capital."

"The poor whom they succour," said La Cesia, smiling at this bit of revolutionary simplicity, "are not of your opinion, I rather suppose."

"We have nothing to do with individuals," replied the old jacobin in an angry tone. "Perish the poor and the sick also, provided we succeed in founding the happiness of the species on a basis recognised by principle. A generation has no value in my eyes: I again repeat, the species is

all I care for. But the night is far advanced, it is now time to retire to bed. You are going to Paris, and you will there judge for yourself of the situation of our affairs. I shall soon join you. In the mean time, here is a letter for my brother-in-law, Colinet, the barrister; he is a man of wit and talent, and will take pleasure in giving you every information of which you stand in need. He is initiated into all our secrets, and reckons among his friends the most illustrious members of both chambers. He is an ardent friend of liberty; and, in fact, we differ but on one point, although I confess that is an essential one. He was born at Rennes, and, like many of his fellow-countrymen, he was a Breton before he knew what it was to be a Frenchman; and therefore he aims at a federative government. That system, which carries us back to the times of the Girondins, has, unfortunately, a great many abettors, especially in the distant departments, which are jealous of the supremacy of the capital. We shall have a great deal of difficulty to make them listen to reason. But, as you have wisely said, let us begin by getting the power, and then we shall see what can be done."

In finishing these words he handed the count

the letter, shut the door gently, and retired without noise.

La Cesia, when left alone, could not help reflecting deeply on all he had seen and heard at Valsombre. He was now convinced that, in the very precarious condition in which France was placed, the party that was favoured by the army would unquestionably gain the victory; and as it seemed generally allowed that the army was averse from the Bourbons, the Bourbons must of course fall. But what was to be the result of the grand catastrophe? Looking to the bad understanding that reigned among those of the liberal party, there was nothing in prospect but confusion and anarchy. It was made up of a number of heterogeneous elements, whose force were very nearly balanced of republicans, Bonapartists, constitutionalists, federalists. Among men whose opinions were so opposite, and who were so fanatically violent, what was to be expected but the most sanguinary struggles, during which the neighbouring powers, as they had done before, would not fail to interpose? La Cesia, indeed, had not the slightest doubt that all the ills that civil war brings in its train would soon fall on that unhappy

country. He was a friend to freedom, but he was generous in his friendship; and he regretted, with such a prospect before him, that engagements of honour should have connected him with this most inauspicious enterprise. "Why did not I accept," said he to himself, "the offers of Lord Byron? Why am I not now in the Peloponnesus? There at least I should have known who were the oppressors, who the oppressed; and combatting there, I should have had the assurance that I served a noble cause, that I was defending the rights of humanity."

These late reflections were sad and discouraging; and he sought in vain to withdraw his mind from them, until at length sleep came to remove him from sorrow that was remediless. Next morning he took leave of St. Gratien, who gave him his dispatches for the committee at Paris.

On quitting Valsombre, La Cesia left Lyons on his left, and traversed Burgundy by slow journeys, out of consideration for the condition of Thomasine; and thus proceeding, they reached Fontainbleau without accident. They there hired a cabriolet, in order to reach by a cross road the castle of Mesnil, where the Countess Gra-

diska had secured an asylum for them; but if, as is truly the case, the great roads in France are in a shameful state of dis-repair, the cross roads, especially in winter, are all but impassable. Being obliged to proceed at little more than a walking pace, the night surprised them when they were yet more than a league from their place of destination. Their guide lost his way, and the horse floundered into a quagmire; the shock was so great that Thomasine, who was within two months of her *accouchement*, was seriously injured by it. It was found impossible, in consequence, to advance farther; and, happily, there was no call for it, as the accident took place within one hundred yards of "Our Lady of the Rock." La Cesia requested the rites of hospitality from the farmer's wife; the rest is known to our readers. We have nothing to add to what has been already told, unless it be to state the changes which so many events had produced in the reciprocal dispositions of two beings formerly so loving.

Madame de Steinman was afflicted to the very bottom of her heart; but confident of the strength of her own virtue, and relying without fear on the count's honour, she remained calm and resigned.

The count, on the contrary, a prey to habitual melancholy, his mind disturbed with contending emotions, passed his days in the alternations of listlessness and the most violent agitation. His project, bold as it was to rashness, even now completely succeeded; and he triumphed in his pride of heart when he contemplated the despair and humiliation of his enemy. But scarcely had he drank deep of the cup of revenge when his lips loathed its bitterness. The presence of Thomasine was a source at once of pleasure and of pain. In the indefinable sentiment that he experienced when he approached her, there mingled the recollections of good for ever lost, the gnawing pang of regret inextinguishable. He still admired the form and face that once enchanted him; but though alive to the charms of her beauty, as well as of her celestial mind, he no longer burnt for the possession of either. Thomasine was now to his eye a temple—lovely indeed, but deserted; where the altar was cast down, and from which the presiding divinity had departed.

THE END.

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